Liberty Or Chains—
Africa Must Be

an autobiography

Nwafor Orizu



His Excellency, Dr. Prince Akweke Abyssinia Nwafor Orizu, the Acting President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, at the grave of the ***Unknown Soldier.*** *Flanking him to the right are Alhaji Shettima Ali Monguno, the Minister of State (Defence) and Major General J T U Aguiyi Ironsi, the General Officer Commanding the Nigerian Army. To the left are H.R.H. Oba Adeyinka Oyekan II, the Oba of Lagos, Admiral Akinwale Wey, the Officer Commanding the Nigerian Navy and Mr. Louis Orok Edet, the Inspector General of Police with other service chiefs standing behind them.*



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A.A. Nwafor Orizu



AFRICA MUST BE

Other Books by the author:

Horizontal Education (1943)
Without Bitterness (1944)
Give Me A Black Man (1981)
Education and Moral Excellence (1983)
Insight Into Nigeria (1983)
Man's Unconquerable Mind (1986)
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Liberty Or Chains – Africa Must Be

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DEDICATION



I dedicate this book to my father, His Royal Highness Ezeugbonyamba the Great, Ezeamaluaso Ogbukagha Igwe Orizu I, the Obi of Nnewi, titular head of Great Anaedo of most eminent Agbaja Clan.



Lady Odoziaku Ebelechukwu Nwafor-Orizu

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My gratitude goes to my beioved wife, Lady Odoziaku Ebelechukwu Nwafor-Orizu (standing left) and to my two brilliant daughters, Ejeagwunobi Obianuju and Jaanna Udunna. Their research, devotion and commitment made it possible for me to conclude this my autobiography. They dug deep into old records of over half a century which were scattered and misplaced during my four years absence from my home - 1953-57 and during the war 1967. This required a kind of hard work under severe discipline.

Of course, all the details of my boyhood were first hand information from my beloved mother Her Royal Highness Ejeagwunobi Onyeucheanu Olieokwe Ugoabo Orizu whose intimate knowledge of my father's inner being was legendary.

I must thank Chief Daniel Chukwudinka Okoli and historian-philosopher, Ezeakabekwo Mbelu Ezekabudu who brought the knowledge of my father's lifestyle home to me. To them must be added Chiefs Umeorimili, Umeaguguesi and Joseph Obiukwu Ezeoke whose amazing knowledge of my father's character and hidden powers transcended that of my immediate relatives in the palace.

I am very much pleased and thankful for the discussions and reviews I had with some informed friends such as Dr. Sam Chukwujekwu, Mr. Goddy Agbasi, Engr. David Chukwujekwu and Chief Peter C. Chigbo.

PROLOGUE

My Fountain of Happiness.

Many are happy because they eat <R>
Some are happy because of wine
Others are happy because of wealth
Some are happy when they are loved
A few enjoy their enemies' defeat
A lot are happy when recognised
Some see happiness only in power
There is justification in all these
But my happiness comes not from them
I can only be happy when I serve
When I know I please my God
When I understand I help the poor
When I know I am friend of the widow
When ingratitude is not avenged
When pleasure is postponed for good of all
When injured pride is deliberately ignored
When I tolerate insults from weaklings and fools
When the jealous enjoys my blessings
And the rebellious receives my care
When the disobedient is allowed to grow
When my beneficiary slaps my face

Chorus: Things of the world are given by God
Wealth and health and power from Him
These are the gifts that God provides
Power to forgive and power to contain
Are things that come from man's endeavour
That is why I am happy, they are mine.

Nwafor Orizu.
March 8, 1987

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SECTION I

NWAFOR ORIZU'S BACKGROUND

This opening section deals with the birth of Dr Orizu; the prophesied and controversial episode of his entrance into the world; the tumultuous polygamous arena; the co-mingling of African nativity and European modernism; the iron discipline and moral dispensation of African aristocracy; the cruel but cultural connivance of suppression of widows and children; the influence of early Christian missionaries that ushered in the hard processes of his educational career and his initiation into the rudiments of leadership among equals and superiors. These opened the gateway to early vision in his life.

– Editor

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Chapter One

PALACE INFLUENCE ON BOYHOOD

So guarded and shielded had been my childhood and youth from every touch of pain and anxiety that love could bear for me, that I never dreamed.that life might be a heavy burden, save as I saw it in the poor I was sent to help.

– Annie Bessant.

The First World War was still active in its impact and effects when people of my generation were born. It was a period when the old order in Africa was changing and a new one taking its place. The idea of universal liberty which arrested the human mind during the Industrial Revolution and aggravated by the American and French Revolutions, was having its foundation laid in Africa. The aftermath of the war completed the odyssey. Clamour for legitimacy in Europe; the emergence of Russia; the decline of the British financial and commercial supremacy; a desire for independence in the colonies; the rising tide of the American Century with its dollar diplomacy; the emergence of Japan and the emancipation of Asia – those far-flung influences, isolated, and yet, with practically common characteristics – awakened African society.

My boyhood was therefore spent in a society which stood on the cross-roads of history – standing midway between the crumbling relics of old Africa and the approaching wave of Western civilization. Our generation may be compared with a bat – an animal which belongs neither to the day nor the night and yet belongs to both. It is both a bird flying with wings and a mammal feeding its young with milk and chews with teeth. Our uniqueness lies in our dual

personality. We combined two different stages of life in one evolutionary process in Africa.

One life was ancient, the other was modern. We saw the very symbols of ancient power and affluence as our old society reached their heights and started to decline and crumble. Things that were known, things that were believed, things in which the people trusted and hoped; certain ideals and institutions which were considered irrevocable and unchanging – all were at war with the pressure of Western modernism, for better or for worse. We did not quite enjoy the tranquillity and satisfaction which characterised that old African society into which we were born. And we were not privileged to an unrestricted participation in the benefits of the machine age of the west to which we have been introduced.

Having grown from boyhood to manhood in such a transitional society, my life was beset with a perpetual attempt to grasp the new while admiring the old, to utilize the present while preserving the past. I was a victim of a dislocated society, and therefore suffered as a psychologically dislocated youth, whose effort to create was often frustrated either by the instability and inertia of the old institutions or by callousness, conspiracy or deliberate restriction by the purveyors of the new civilization. Confusion, or a yearning for the glimpses of the realities for self-identification was my experience. No doubt, suppression revitalized my ego, contemptuous attitude of the Europeans called out a superiority complex. It will be seen therefore, that it was out of condition rather than out of design that the experiences of boyhood at home and early manhood outside home made me develop an attitude of uncompromising warfare against wrong principles in general and against foreign rule in my country in particular. I started my war against alien rule subconsciously from early times, and it has landed me from one trouble to another and yet, without bitterness, I have neither retreated nor repented.

My father was a strict disciplinarian. Blind to age, he made no distinction between the young and the old when it came to making everyone conform to the rules of his rigid life. For us, his own children, to live with him was a Spartan adventure. We had to learn discipline from the cradle – I mean from the cradle. The trouble

with my father was that he was royal in and out of the *Obi*. As I think of him now, I have not been able to remember any single moment in our domestic life when I thoroughly enjoyed his tender care without being conscious that I was in the presence of a monarch, or a demi-god who must be treated with reverence and awe. At times, he had moments to be kind and fatherly but only in a manner peculiar to him.

In order to appreciate the seriousness of my father's disciplinary life, let me list just a few of his do's and don'ts:

(i) His person may not be touched; he may not touch any one.
(ii) He may not be invited to dinner to any home any where outside the *Obi*. The Royal Dining Table is at *Galungalu*.
(iii) No person shall mention the word "oil" while he dined. If he heard it mentioned he must eat no more from that dish.
(iv) No person in the *Obi* shall whistle to his hearing and none shall whistle after 5 p. m. whether to his hearing or not.
(v) No bell and *ogene* shall be sounded while he dined
(vi) Any of his personal effects must not be touched by any of his servants or wives without first washing their hands. in the "holy water". This applies to us the children.
(vii) None of the servants or wives may step inside his Dining Parlour or his personal rooms without washing the feet and legs in the "holy water". This also applied to us.
(viii) He may eat nothing whatsoever which was not cleansed or touched in the "holy water".
(ix) He may observe *Ubosi Okwu* which was a day of discipline for the titled lords of the realm. This day (once every eight days), his food must contain no oil. Only a virgin or a male cook may enter the royal kitchen. He would have no contact with women. His special outfit for that day was white suit, white shoes, open neck white shirt and white belt. He wore this dress in the evening inside *Galungalu* before retiring.
(x) While on tour, those with him for personal services must not touch any other object. If by mistake they did, their hands must

be cleansed in the "holy water" which would be carried along wherever he went.

(xi) He must not see a corpse and therefore never attend funeral ceremonies.

(xii) He must not sit down on any chair used by any human being anywhere.

(xiii) He must not travel in a public transport vehicle nor will anybody enter the same car with him, not to talk about sitting near him.

(xiv) He may not attend market or any crowded place.

Father lived in accordance with the ancient philosophy of our royalty. Men whose determination and inclination were governed by reference to the distant ends, had been held to possess the highest intelligence. To live in aloofness and solitariness was to act for another generation yet unborn, to live for them and to purify the present ground upon which that future depends. The *Obi* was the symbol of the society and a member of the family of the gods whom he represented on earth. To a real Nnewi man with historical anchorage, the great *Obi* was synonymous with our great goddess *Edo* – the mother of the state. The *Obi* was born of a woman, but did not quite belong to the train of ordinary men. He might die, but his death was only a regular journey of the gods in the cyclical odyssey from one realm of mystic experience to another, while his spirit reigned forever.

Such was the person of our father. Each child must observe his rules of which I have given only a minor list. Lack of ability to keep those rules may result in the child being excluded from the inner circles of the father's domestic life. Only some of us were able to cope with those rules without special strain. Some of us had no aptitude or inclination for rigid observances of Palace Rules.

Those of us who instinctively adapted to the rules were the favorites. Father's attitude and choice among us might not be entirely objective, but a part of it was based on the ability of each of us to adapt himself to a disciplined life. The more you were disciplined, the more he loved you. You must be able to read his facial expressions and watch his eyes as they indicated one thing or another. You must endure hardship, fasting, and hard work. You should be neither over

enthusiastic nor cold over things of appetite. Your appetite should be good (he liked that), but you should not show any sign of a desire to eat unless the food was given to you at the right time by the right person under acceptable circumstances. Being boisterous and vivacious pleased him, but you must know when not to be noisy. Our elder brothers were not restricted from drinking whisky, gin, brandy, beer, palm wine. We the younger ones were spoon-fed with honey, meat, wine and sweets, but those things must be taken at his bidding or at the bidding of appropriate servants or wives. Not all wives were permitted to feed father's children. We were supposed to obey our mothers, but too much attachment to one's mother or inclination to stay around the female section of the palace was enough to disqualify you. Each of us was expected to be lion-hearted, but like all carnivores, we were to hide our dangerous claws and walk harmlessly on our paws until occasion arose. We enjoyed, undiscouraged, certain measure of rascality and naughtiness, and, yet to be with our father, we must be calm and mature in our disposition. He was a great sportsman, a famous wrestler, horse- rider, a perfect shot, and he expected his children to become first class sportsmen, but we had to practice only in his absence, unless he called upon us to wrestle or run a race for his own private entertainment within the inner grounds.

Another serious principle of our father was that: *rank and recognition and reward must be based on how well and not how long*. Our custom was such that family rank was reckoned on the basis of age. If there be anything to be divided among brothers, the oldest had the first choice and so down the line. To this custom father had said "No"[1] To him, it was how well you wrestled, how fast you finished your portion of work would determine your share of rewards among the children.

Father was very fond of taking some of us along when visiting places. I used to join him to his law court and sat down behind his chair while cases went on. Once in a long while he would go to

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1 Merit as against age philosophy is an inherited custom from Ezeoguine the founder of the present dynasty.

European mercantile houses for shopping. At times those European merchants gave me gifts, perhaps in order to please my father. They gave presents of toys, sweets, and cans of assorted biscuits. One day, I went with my father to shop in the Niger Company Department Store in Onitsha. One European agent there gave me a can of assorted biscuits. Those gifts were not received by me personally. Father's servants with us received them and kept separately in the car until we returned home. Before we the children would touch or eat those biscuits, the servants would cleanse or touch the can with "holy water".

All the formalities notwithstanding, my appetite for the biscuits was keen. As we drove home, I was only wishing that the car would run faster. At about 5.30 p.m., father summoned some of us of almost the same age group and the can was opened and an attendant divided the whole biscuits into unequal parts. Being the third in age rank in that group, I was supposed to take the third largest share. Onyenkuzi took the largest share. I did not like it because I thought that my father was cheating me when he knew very well that the whole biscuit can was a gift to me while we were shopping. If my other brothers must be given, why not give me a lion's share, which I deserved? I dared not say so. When Onyenkuzi took the largest share, I was too afraid to protest because Onyenkuzi was a bit older and stronger and was a bully. If I dared protest, he would "murder" me later on. But when the second to him, Nwokeji, was about to take the second share, I threw myself on the ground and cried, kicking my feet into the air and rolling around. I thought that father was going to have me properly punished for my protest, but he did not. He surprised me by applying his principle of "how well and not how long."

He said to me "Stand up Nwafor and stop crying. I will make them return the biscuits, and we start from the beginning. You will certainly get your share". I was very happy, thinking that I was just going to get the largest share for the asking. Not so. Father said that we all had to wrestle before him, and then take our shares of the biscuits according to individual ability in the wrestling "match".

Being the complainant, I was to wrestle with Onyenkuzi, the eldest and strongest. One, two, three! – he flung me to the ground. That was all right with me. I expected his indisputable victory. Then came the next to him, Nwokejiobi. One, two, three! I pulled him down. The contest closed. I was at once proclaimed "the second" instead of "the third" to Onyenkuzi as I used to be. The biscuits were divided into four places again. Onyenkuzi made first choice, I made the second, Nwokeji made the third and Nwankwo made the fourth. Pictures of beautiful flowers were drawn on the biscuit can. It was given to me and I played with it all day while "storing" my wealth of biscuits in it. That was typical of how our father encouraged us to appreciate the value of individual effort, selt-confidence and independence.

I grew to think as my father that age without work is of no use. Perhaps it is a great fault, but I have come to minimize and despise the undue emphasis the Africans placed on age. Nincompoops and dunderheads, idiots and imbeciles always claimed unmerited superiority over young, brilliant minds in Africa, and by the heavy weight of traditional sanctions, intelligence and knowledge might be sacrificed on the alter of eccentricities of decadence and age.

To respect age is necessary. I approve of the principles of primogeniture (not the British but the African concept of it), I insist that a young person must recognize and accept the experience of the experienced, the wisdom of the wise, the practical conservatism of the long-lived, but not just the mere long years of an unapplied, unthinking and useless life of any aged person. Science and social change are incompatible with adoration of age for its own sake. A nation must be guided by mature heads but the contribution of the unfettered vision and fearless imagination of the youth is a sine qua non. A young person must be given some reasonable avenue for self-expression and intellectual exercise on matters of social action. In the field of science, it is the young ones whose imagination must be sharpened not only to comprehend the existing scientific truths, but to improve upon them and establish new hypothesis for continued advancement of the human race.

Another influence on my life was my father's attitude toward hard work. He hated laziness in his children. There were hundreds of messengers, but my father himself used to find time from the law courts and state duties to go to the farm, worked there, and we the children followed and worked with him. His presence in the farm made the peasant workers feel good and willing. He encouraged their spirit of competition, and he usually showered praises and rewards upon the hardest workers. On the farm where yams were planted, there was no recognition of royalty in the traditional sense. While no one would dare come close to him. I noticed that in the farm, however, people were a little freer and took liberty to treat him more casually, and he seemed to enjoy the informality so long as the morale of the workers was boosted thereby.

Some farm lands covered an area of about a mile square. The whole area may be cleared for planting of yams, beans and melon in one year. My father would fix a day for planting. Sometimes it took from several hundreds to a thousand men to be able to plant the yams in the whole area in one day. The ablest young men were invited from all sections of the realm to "turn up early in the morning of the appointed date to the Royal farm and prove your mettle before the *Obi* and the elders!" *Okwa-Ekwe*[2] and *Oti-Mkpu*[3] would be at work, reminding the people of the fixed date. On the morning when the farm work would take place, the musicians would go early to the farm land and on their way they kept on announcing to the men with young blood that "the day of the competition on the Royal Farm is at hand!" As they passed each village they recalled the names of their past heroes and heroines, and mentioned the names of their ablest contemporaries and invoked them into action. They were aroused to "turn up to the Royal Farm this morning and meet the challenge of other young men from other villages and let us know the ablest of the young men of the realm!" From separate compounds you hear each of the young men responding: "*Anam anu ife inaka*!" which means "I have heard the challenge." Within

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2 Okwa-Ekwe means the player of the tom tom.
3 Oti-Mkpu means Traditional announcer.

a few minutes, they would get their farm implements and hurry off to the Royal Farm for the day's competition.

In the meantime, my father and his suite would be ready to go to the farm. Some farms may be more than four miles from our home. Father's suite would be composed of the bell ringer, chair carriers, *Okwa-Oja*[4], Okwa-Ekwe, carrier of Holy water, important elders, some palace messengers, a gun carrier, and a host of others with minor duties to perform. The trip may be either by car, hammock, or a cart drawn by men. Father's work on the farm was supervision, watching the progress of the young men competing. He would return to his seat and cut the yam seedlings for planting while the elders would sit around him doing their own yam cutting and telling stories of ancient affairs, drinking palm wine and snuffing ground tobacco.

We the children were not exempt from the farm work. We were too young to plant with hoes or cultivate the ground, but we helped our father by handing over to him yam seedlings for cutting, and distributing those yam cutlets to the planters. If there be any other errands to be run which was within the competence of small boys we were expected to act. Any show of laziness, unwillingness to work, reluctance to stand out in the scorching sun, while the work went on was an offence.

I remember once, we were summoned to carry some mud from the pit to the ground where it was being moulded into blocks for sun-baking. It was early in the morning. We had no break-fast yet. Well, I thought it was fun to do the job. I enjoyed it for a while, particularly when my father came around to watch us. After about twenty minutes "hard labor", when father had left, I heard the bell for his break-fast and my stomach began to jump, and I was not willing to work beyond the time father was watching us. The real laborers were on their routine job. We were intruders, but father gave instruction that we should be engaged that morning. The mud was rather heavy and mud-carrying was a dirty job. The laborers

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4 Okwa-Oja means a professional fluter.

in the pit who apportioned the mud lumps to us increased the weight each time, and I wanted to cry. I was desperate and in distress, but I feared the scorn of my other brothers and probable report that might go to my father that I was a weakling. I tried to endure. Then the final bell for father's breakfast rang. I knew he had left the *Obi* for *Galungalu* for his breakfast. I wanted some breakfast. Then the drama was on. I pretended that something fell into my eyes and that it must have been something poisonous. I cried out "*Ogini nemem n'anya ka ogwu*?"[5] Then I answered to my own question: "*gwogili gwogili nemem n'anya!*"[6] Well I knew not what was "*gwogili gwogili*" even now, and it was a meaningless word, except as it represents a sound of a drum. But every body knew my trick. The laborers laughed and released me of my "hard labor" at once. As soon as I was released of mud-carrying and told to go and clean myself in the "holy water" before attending father's breakfast, "eye-trouble" vanished! For some time in the palace, I was nicknamed "*Gwogili Gwogili*". My father knew nothing about it in the beginning, but when later he learned of my trick, he laughed and I was surprised he did not seem to feel I was a weakling.

I mention this little incidence to show that while I tried my best to please my father, I was not all that brave and willing to do all kinds of work; sometimes it was a matter of compulsion. We were not the happy-go-lucky type, although we knew of the luxuries and ease that surrounded us. Everybody in the palace knew our father's spartan policy in upbringing his children, but they equally realized his sensitivity when we children cried, or his anxiety when we were hurt or fell ill.

Another principle of life which dominated the atmosphere of the palace was a terrific belief in the supernatural, destiny, mysticism and God. The palace was an undeclared "Mecca" for all famous Ibo and some non-Ibo medical doctors[7] of the time. Father was ranked

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5 "What is troubling my eyes as if poison?".
6 "My eyes are turning like a drum sound".
7 I do not refer to doctors trained in European Universities, but Nigerian native doctors from Yoruba, Igala, Benin, Hausa, Efik, Itshekiri etc.



Mother, H.R.H Ejeagwunobi Onyeucheanu Olieokwe Ugoabo Orizu.

among the most advanced in the art of understanding the supernatural phenomena. Conditions of things in the palace and the life conducted by my father gave sanction to that belief. Every place, every corner, every chamber, was filled with some kind of defensive or offensive supernatural mechanism. In front of the palace you find an *Egbo*,[8] behind the throne you find an *Ezumezu*,[9] back of the palace walls would be *Ogwu Omumu*,[10] in *Obialachu* would be *Ogwu-Agha* (war shrine). No ending to this. Every phase of human activity had its "*Ogwu*". That belief was not peculiar to our palace. In all parts of the land up to this day people believed that there was some mystery in every occurrence in human experience, that nothing could be accomplished without using some kind of "*Ogwu*" for it. To them, there was "Ogwu" for wrestling, there was another for influencing people, another for keeping a wife's or a husband's love, another for longevity, another for fertility, ad infinitum. Scientific medicine and modern psychology have not supplanted this idea.

There was an exaggerated notion of this belief in my home, because the Royal Family was believed to have incurred numerous enemies who constantly inflicted punishment upon the Royal household through the evil "*Ogwu*"[11] concocted by wicked witch doctors, seers, and magicians. The punishment in the form of pestilence, famine, infertility, dysentery, small pox, leprosy, paralysis, melancholy, impotency, et cetera could be directed to the Royal household through some invisible channels known only to the unseen forces and dangerous spirits. Or they could be sent in the form of what was called "*Ochuchu.*"[12].

It was owing to this belief that my father was fond of calling me Nwafor *Udunsi*.[13] I could not understand why I was always called *Udunsi*. One day I asked my mother what was my father's name. She said it was "Orizu." Then I asked, "why was I called

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8 Egbo means preventive concoction.
9 Ezumezu means Aggregate of all Medicines.
10 Ogwu Omumu means Fecundity Medicine.
11 Ogwu means medicine.
12 Ochuchu: Evil concoction to injure the victims.
13 Udu-nsi means pot of poison.

Nwafor Udunsi when I should be called Nwafor Orizu? Mother, at first, was reluctant to tell me why, but I insisted. Here was her story: "When I was expecting you, Nwafor, a soothsayer called Okafor Onyeamunemenjo was brought to the palace. He had no hands and no feet, and was carried in an open basket. He predicted to your father about your birth by saying:

1. That you were to be born on an Afor day.
2. That you would be an image of your father.
3. That you would be called Nwafor Udunsi.
4. That people would know of you and your name would be on the lips of everybody.

As time went on, you were put to bed by early hours on an Afor day. As the morning advanced, a pot of poison (*Ochuchu* or *Udunsi*) was discovered in the palace by the security men. Nwafor, my son the story of *Udunsi* is a story of vengeance to deprive your father of having sons: Odumegwu Ulasi, Nsidiuko Ogo and Izumuo Mgbadanyokenyi, engaged in kidnapping as their stock in trade. The first time they were caught and brought to court, your father acquitted them but warned them never to engage in kidnapping again. Your father, to drive this warning home, asked Ezeakum to get Chukwuanu, Onuchukwu, Nsoedo, Nnajifor Uzoafia, Ulasi and Ikedionwu. Before these important members of the family of these kidnappers, he warned them that next time they were brought to his court for kidnapping he would surely punish them. They did not heed this warning but continued kidnapping people and selling them into slavery until they were caught and brought to court a second time. Your father sentenced them to six months imprisonment each when it was proved beyond doubt that they committed this crime. That was Odumegwu and Nsidiuko. Odumegwu died in prison. Nsidiuko and Izumuo vowed to avenge his death on the Royal household, though the case was tried in the open court."

"In the meantime", mother continued, "your father summoned all relatives and the elders of the state to find out the conveyor of the evil pot. They discovered that it was a man called Mgbemena that was sent by Nsidiuko and Izumuo to convey the "poison pot"

That was why the poison pot – *Udunsi* was brought twenty-four hours after your birth.

During that morning as soon as *Udunsi* was discovered your uncle Oji Ukonwa entered and told me to remain in my own compound and never to come out to any other part of the palace, because *Ochuchu* was brought at the *Obi*. It might destroy my new born babe which was you, Nwafor. Oji himself tied *akwu Ojukwu*,[14] *ogilisi*,[15] and *abubu*[16] et cetera together and hung it on the door entrance. I remained inside my house for nine weeks without seeing any other part of the palace, nor fed you with mother's milk because the *Ochuchu* had made it bad. Nature's call were all answered within my room in a basin and acrried out. The predictions of the cripple soothsayer, Okafor Onyeamunemenjo, were fulfilled. You were born on Afor day and the *Obi* was infested with *Udunsi* or *Ochuchu* hours after your birth. That was why you were called "Nwafor-Udunsi".

Little doubt why the *Obi* was a garden of wonders – a fertile ground for true and false prophets and magicians, a big conclave for iron discipline, of distrust, and self-denial. Visitors were distrusted and suspected. A quest for life nurtured the principle of superstition, while experience fostered dependence on magicians, soothsayers and prophets. I cannot now relate the details of the processes through which we were initiated into certain cults of the *Obi*. Nor can I write how we were immunized against poison and witch doctors. We were taught the ways of dangerous medicines and their antidotes. At the age of four each of us had gone through all the immunization processes, except those reserved for the older persons.

It is interesting to note that despite all the belief in the soothsayers and the rest, father was a great champion of the Christian Church. The Anglican Missionaries came to Nnewi in 1903. My father gave them a part of our family land to establish their church, and he attended church service. Whenever he came to the church

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14 "Akwu Ojukwu" – a kind of palm fruit
15 "Ogilisi" – a tree used in serving gods.
16 "abubu" – a by-product of palm oil tree.

service, there was excitement inside the church. We were met by two church wardens outside the church premises who would solemnly escort us through the vestry into the church, to a specially reserved place near the sanctuary. A special chair would be brought along from the *Obi* since father must not use any other chair.

Missionaries visited the *Obi* frequently. They usually administered prayers and father was advised how to rule well. They were treated most kindly because our people were lovers of strangers. And my father was popular among the missionaries because he made large donations to the church. We were therefore brought up, not only according to our own traditions, but also as good Christians. Pictures of king Solomon, David and Nebuchadnezzar were hung on the walls of the upper chambers of obialachu. In one of the portraits hanging on the south side of the chamber Nebuchadnezzar was sitting majestically on a golden stool, wearing diamond and gold rings, royal apparels and sandals. He looked gorgeous at the height of his earthly glory. In the other picture hanging on the north side of the chamber directly facing my father's chair, the king was naked, abject, brutish, and haggard. He was on his knees and hands like a quadruped. His toe and finger nails were long like the claws of a beast. Hairs grew wildly over his body and his beard formed a little grassland on his pathetic-looking face.

The missionaries gave father those two pictures depicting both triumph and tragedy. They wanted to show how God treated an arrogant, pompous Monarch who did not remember God, his creator. The anticlimax of turning from a human being into a jungle beast was a bold interpretation of retributive justice. Father would not have hung those portraits in his own chambers were he not impressed with the moral underscoring of the legend.

Another instructive aspect of the palace life was the presence of elderly men whose job was to tell stories of ancient men and women of the state. They dramatised their lives as though those heroes and heroines were the sons and daughters of the gods. And they often showed unconsciously that the coming of the Europeans had turned the heroic nature of our men into shambles. One of those stories of our past heroes shall be told here.

Onyetube Ezenabo was an Nnewi hero. He lived about three centuries ago. He had blue blood in his veins. Ezenabo his father was the son of Ezeanyika, who himself was the son of Ezeoguine – the founder of the present ruling house. Onyetube was said to be the strongest man of his time. He was promoted to the rank of a war general before he was twenty-five. He was 6ft. 3in tall with extraordinarily huge frames. His mother was an Ozubulu woman, and people believed that his unique strength and fabulous energy was constantly replenished by the mighty Ozubulu god called *Udo-Ekwulu*. Onyetube was therefore feared by everyone. Not only that he was physically powerful but because he was under the guardianship of a dreaded god. It was believed that Onyetube could not be hurt by any mortal instrument. Bullet could not pierce through his body. Sword became blunt at his sight. He was a terror.

There was a dangerous lion (odum)[17] which menaced people's lives in Nnewi. Hunters tried hard but could not kill it. One day, Onyetube decided to fight the lion with his fist. He announced his decision. He wanted no gun, no spear or even a companion. His mother cried. His wife begged him not to fight a lion empty-handed and alone. He was dauntless. His father, Ezenabo, a brave man himself, was not disturbed.

The day came. Onyetube, the hero, after offering sacrifice to the god of his mother, left his observers confidently and walked into the wide jungle, looking for the beast.

The lion advanced with a lightening speed, but Onyetube welcomed it with a blow of his electrical fist on the head. The animal roared and sprang up in rage, made a second advance and reached the hero's head with its sharp claws. Onyetube responded again with still a more crushing fist, but the animal succeeded to implant its claws on the back of his head, and grabbed the skin of his skull, which it tore and used as a piece of cloth to cover the face of the hero. Now the lion was very close to him, ready to kill. Onyetube got hold of the lion's head and with his third fist broke the skull

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17 One of his descendants was named Odum, by which name his family still goes.

into pieces. The hero fell down because the skin of his skull was excruciatingly painful, covering his face, while the lion with the skull broken, died instantaneously.

Onyetube raised his voice. People rushed into the thick jungle and carried both the wounded hero and the dead lion into the city. The skin of his skull was stitched back and it healed soon after, but the dead animal was carried to the *Obi* and vivisected. Its carcass was made palatable for the brave, a part of it was sacrificed to the hero's god, and the remnant was divided among the traditional heads of the state. Such was the spirit of patriotism of the ancients. Life meant nothing to the heroes when defending the lives of their fellow citizens.

Based on this and similar stories, we started early to admire heroes of our own lineage and to grow brave and fearless of death in defence of the fatherland. We were often told that it was owing to the coming of the Europeans to Nigeria, that our people were made cowards. The story of "Breaking Guns at Nkwo Market" of Nnewi was repeated to our hearing almost daily. It was a story of how English soldiers came in 1905 with their machine guns to Nnewi. They ordered all the men to surrender all their war guns, collected them at Nkwo Market. When they were collected, they were broken and burnt in thousands. That deprived all the citizens of their guns or any defensive weapons. After listening to this story, I always imagined when I shall grow into manhood and expel the invaders of my father's land. That was the inclination of most of us in our boyhood. We knew that we were under *Enu-Oyibo*[18] and that a day of restoration of our freedom was yet to come. How to get about it was not contemplated. In us was the spirit of revolt. The method was left to the gods and to time. But this state of mind explains a lot of what lines my life followed as I grew from boyhood into manhood.

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18 Enu-Oyibo means whiteman's rule or era.

Chapter Two

EIGHTY WIVES

Like Annie Bessant, I would not say that every idea of my father had corresponded with the real. My father would not have said that himself. But my father was real, and were any one to argue ... that kind of argument would run into insuperable difficulty.

– Nwafor Orizu.

I was born by a mother and a father who loved themselves passionately. And despite the fact that mother was one out of the eighty wives of my father, and one of the late arrivals, she came on the top among the most beloved. If, along with peculiar intimacy, trusting a wife with a larger number of various but vital domestic responsibilities than other wives, indicated trust and love, then my mother got her lion's share of my father's trust and love in the *Obi*. In a polygamous family, a child was born fortunate whose mother had won the father's special confidence. Such was my childhood privilege. I was one of my father's favourites and mother's darling.

Between my father and mother there existed absolute hymeneal peace. For the short-lived period I enjoyed them together, I never saw them quarrel. With all the storm and turbulence of my father's reverential personality, he acted tame before my mother. I had seen father openly quarrelling with other wives, but mother told me that he never raised a hand of anger against her. As far as I could see and as I was told by some elders, the two personalities found satisfaction in each other and thereby enjoyed an exclusive confidence

capable of stirring, and indeed did stir a whirlwind of jealousy and envy in our polygamous home.

A child who enjoyed the favouritism of a polygamous father, had innocently, but inevitably inherited a perpetual and deep-seated contempt and savage hatred of his half-brothers and sisters who were less favoured. He was bound to play the Biblical Joseph among his brothers. My own childhood fate was therefore punctuated with a combination of passionate parental love on one hand, and a violent fraternal jealousy on the other. I shall elaborate on some results of this jealousy later.

The responsibility of one man marrying eighty wives called for a highly specialised institutional organization, experience, strong traditional and cultural observances on which the stability of the family could rest. I was born into that social order. I lived in it. I was cultured into its many-sided aspects. To live in a polygamous family was as natural to me as living in a proletariat, mobile society of a man-and-woman-unto-themselves as it is to a child born in London or New York City. I did not realize that a family of a gentleman could be as small as to contain only one man and one woman, or at most increased only by a few children they could produce under ration! To me, as a child, family meant many wives, many brothers and sisters, numerous cousins and uncles, numberless brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, ad infinitum.

The organization of my father's family was unique and totally of African origin. According to Nnewi culture men did not have concubines. A woman was either a wife or she was not. There was no midway. When therefore I say that father had eighty wives, they were not concubines. I mean wives, in law and in fact.

These wives were organized in two ways. First, chronologically (seniority according to the order of each wife's date of arrival). Second, meritoriously (seniority according to each wife's individual ability and faithfulness). Each wife had her own grade in both lines of classification. One wife who was third in the order of arrivals, might become twentieth in the order of merit or vice versa. The chronological order was useful for certain traditional and ritual purposes only. The order of merit was useful for the purpose of

the actual government of his family and for the state-wide government of Nnewi women as a whole.

Based on chronology, the head of all the wives whose name was Nne Egodi was the daughter of Udechukwu family related to Ndukwe family of Oraifite. She was my father's first wife, and was therefore the titular head of all the wives. Her functions were essentially of ritual nature. For example, when an oxen or a goat was offered to a god or to the spirit of the ancestors, she was to be called upon to take a share of the meat before any other wife could be given, or she might be required to be the first to offer kolanuts to father to offer to his ancestors in certain ceremonies before the ancestral spirit would accept the kolanuts from other wives. In other words, there were certain traditional rituals important to the entire family but which could not be performed without her participation. She was indeed the spiritual head of all the wives.

Based on merit, the leader of the eighty wives was Mgbugo. She was married from the famous Ezenibe family of Igboukwu town. She was the executive leader of all the wives, in political, social and in various other aspects. She was also the spiritual head of all the women of the entire state of Nnewi. She was the first lady. Unlike the houses of other wives, her house was called *Enete*.

The *Enete* was designed in the same manner as the *Obi* itself, only it was not as big. Eight cannons were set facing the main gate. *Enete* had all the immunities the *Obi* had. For example, no person might fight while there. Even the slightest case of assault carried with it a heavy fine for contempt of the *Enete*, because the place was considered a public court and a public property of the state. It was considered a public meeting place for women.

Mgbugo herself had other private houses within the *Enete*. She had male servants, personal to her. Unfortunately, Mgbugo had no child of her own. She was five feet seven inches tall; she moved with most elegant and graceful composure; her teeth were as white as cattle egret, her fulani face was a specimen of proportion and beauty; her skin color defies definition because it oscillated between genuine golden and rich mahogany hues; her ever young-looking eyes were the gravity of attraction; when she rose to walk it was

a ceremony by itself. Her maiden name was Mgbugo, meaning, a woman whose beauty outshines the brightness of an eagle. Her other name was Ugodi, meaning "husband's eagle." Eagle was considered the most beautiful of all beautiful birds. Mgbugo must have been one of those few human beings coined by the master artist among the gods and not by the apprentices.

The houses of other wives were arranged to fit each wife's own special duties and functions. The *Obi* itself was like an ancient city. It was surrounded by an outer wall, twenty feet tall, having three large guarded gates, including one entrance for automobiles. Inside this outer wall, each wife had her own compound, apportioned and surrounded by separate walls from ten to fifteen feet high each with a separate gate. Inside each wife's compound were to be found several houses built according to her own design and taste.

A wife in her own compound was a free and independent person. She had the key of the gate leading into her own compound and she, within certain limit, admitted whom she wanted, so far as the entrant was a permissible person to the royal compound. She could plan her own compound life according to her disposition and facilities. She could get as many male and female servants, labourers and farmers. There was no limit to her freedom of enterprise. She could aspire to be as wealthy as the ruler himself, and history had recorded certain royal wives who became richer than the *Obi*, centuries past. The most recent one being Nne-ayi Akubudu, the wife of Ezeoguine the great who lived some four hundred years ago. For this reason, it was a traditional thing for my father to encourage his wives for self expansion. It was the wife's prerogative to decide what type of enterprise best suited her, though she could not engage in anything that might remove her from home beyond a few hours during the day. It was my father's duty to discover the aptitude of each wife and encourage her accordingly. Royal family elders and advisers helped father in making such arrangements, since the peace of the family depended largely on a satisfactory division of labour and responsibilities.

The whole set up was based on duties and privileges. My father had certain duties he was bound by custom and law to perform toward

the wives and vice versa. When duties were performed, privileges naturally followed. Now, we shall mention some of my father's duties.

As soon as a newly married wife was made public to the entire royal house, some important family elders were informed. They would come around to "look her over." Wine, kola and meat would be served to them, and the new wife would be asked to serve them the wine. She would be properly dressed and instructed before hand how to behave before the elders, how to salute them and the manner of serving them wine. The whole thing was just a mere formality of bringing the wife in official contact with men that mattered in the family, and also giving the elders the satisfaction that they participated in the decision of accepting the choice made by the *Obi*. Those elders had reserved the right to reject the wife, and in such a case, which did not occur often, she was to be sent back to her parents quietly, so that her future marriage to some one else would not be impaired. If, however she was accepted, a date to give her "Welcome Gifts" would be fixed at once. The "Welcome Gifts" were to be presented to her by my father.

The elders would assemble on the appointed date. In the presence of the wife my father would present the gifts. They mainly consisted of a piece or pieces of farmland, kolanut, coconut, palm and breadfruit trees. Some cloths and other assorted gifts of ornament may be included in accordance with the family background of the wife. In some cases a number of men and women servants were included among the gifts. With these, the wife was to begin her independent life in a separate compound which should be set aside for her within the *Obi*. What she did with those "Welcome gifts" would determine her future and merit-classification. If she proved industrious and ambitious, the husband and the elders would continue to open avenues for her expansion. If she made no use of her gifts, if she proved lazy and easy-going, if her wealth did not multiply, she would be relegated to such duties as would fit her limited ability, such as cooking.

The other duties of my father toward the wives were: general protection, constant provision for clothes and jewellry, the upkeep

of the women's houses, providing them with men to do hard work, complete care and education of the children. When these wives were to attend to places outside the *Obi*, they were provided with body guards. Each was initiated into important cults and secret organizations that bring recognition to women in general. Family doctors' bills were paid by my father.

According to our law, any property which was given to the wife by the husband or her people, or any wealth she legitimately amassed were her own, and could not be taken away from her by force by the husband, although she could not dispose of them without his consent. In case of the husband's death, she was still the sole owner of her own properties as long as she remained in her deceased husband's house. On her death, her own property would go to her own particular male children. If she had no male children the property would be inherited by the eldest son of her husband. Daughters could not inherit properties of their parents except the personal effects of the mother. There is exception to this rule: in case of "Nrachi", where a man traditionally changes the status of his daughter to that of a son or a successor. In that case she cannot marry anyone but can have children with a consort. But the wife was properly protected by law in our society – whether the family was monogamous or polygamous. That applied to my father's house.

What were the essential duties of the wives to my father? To discuss their duties intelligently, we shall discuss their classes with it. Apart from their chronological and merit order, the rank and file of the eighty wives were grouped under three main classes: Those under first class were considered the highest aristocrats of the wives. They were about ten in number. All the best qualities of womanhood were expected from this group. They were the most beautiful. Their parentage were of the highest order. Among them were the most industrious and therefore the wealthiest. They were expected to make the highest contributions to family treasury and general welfare of the *Obi* and the state. They had the closest access to my father and were considered totally above suspicion. They were strictly *prohibited from doing any manual work or walking long distances*. To be sure of that, each of them wore heavy elephant tusks on the ankles. That

made it difficult for them to walk long distances or to do any hard work at any time, as some of them like my mother would like to do in my father's absence.

The domestic duties of the wives coincided with their classes. The first class had the most important duties to perform. Mgbugo herself belonged to this group together with her immediate lieutenants. They made decisions for the proper government of the wives. They served as liaison officers between my father and the rest of the wives.

Should there be any important issues to be settled, father would summon them and Mgbugo to discuss the issue first. It was their function to summon all other wives inside her compound (*Enete*) and tell them my father's wishes, and carry back words to my father, should the other wives raise objections, until mutual agreement was reached.

They helped Mgbugo in maintaining discipline among other wives. All issues of quarrelling, fighting and so forth were settled according to prescribed regulations by the group. If the parties were dissatisfied with their decision, that was the time my father would be called upon. They saw to it that each wife performed her general household duties. When a fine was imposed upon any wife because of her misbehaviour, such as fighting or tale-bearing, this group helped Mgbugo enforce the order. They helped finance household dances and parties for their own pleasures within the *Obi*.[1]

The wives organized their women dances, peculiarly their own, with which they entertained themselves and my father. Sometimes when an important state visit took place, such as if an *Obi* from another state visited my father, the wives dressed in their best and entertained the guest. Then there were other special native solos they sang for moonlight enjoyment with father during the romantic harmattan nights, when no rains disturbed a prolonged midnight conviviality.

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1 The dances were "Odi" and "Egede" – the origin of the present day egedege.

The functions of the first group of the wives, as already mentioned were state wide. For example, when Nnewi leaders made decisions affecting women, my father would inform Mgbugo. She would in turn send messages to the three leading women of other *Obi's*, such as Uruagu, Umudim and Nnewichi. They would meet under the chairmanship of Mgbugo and deal with the matters in hand. It was in this way that Nnewi women governed themselves. They ruled themselves in many respects and conducted their own affairs on a statewide basis without undue interference, except that they must comply with the specific ruling of the government and custom of the land. They conducted their own festival on a state-wide basis, separate from men. The men directed them but indirectly.

Then came the second group among the wives. This group was also considered above suspicion, but they were not as wealthy as the first. They were unquestionably beautiful, but not as superlative as the first group. They were faithful, but they did not quite play into my father's psychology as to permit unlimited privileges. They were industrious, but perhaps, nature did not always bless their labor. They were respected by other wives, but they did not wear elephant tusks on their legs. They were not to work hard on the farm, but they were not provided with as many servants as the first group. They lived in their separate compounds, but those compounds were neither as large nor as spectacularly or strategically erected as the ones belonging to the members of the first group. In other words, in essence, they had everything that the first group had, but in lesser degree.

The functions of this second class were essential. They helped promote social activities, participated actively in dances, light labor and made contributions toward certain family expenses. The sanitation of the compound was in their hands. Some of them prepared meals for certain guests of the palace.

The last group were the most numerous. To be above suspicion was the common attribute of all the wives, and this group was no exception. This group were really what may be called the "unclassified." They were there awaiting classification into first or second group or to remain in the third. Most of them were the

youngest girls, virgins who were not yet full grown to own special compounds or to start on independent family lives of their own. But there were some older wives who had been tested and left permanently in the third group.

This third group, as may be seen, were the least wealthy within the *Obi*. Being a sort of a testing ground, those who remained there for good may be considered the most under-privileged of the wives. Their functions were confined to farm work. They had the liberty to carry yams and pots and firewood on their heads. Sometimes, they had no servants. Their access to my father was rather irregular. Comparatively, not much attention was paid to them. They seldom attended the family fire-side chat which went on every evening between my father and other classes of wives. During the fire-side chat, the chosen ones drank and chatted and gossiped and glanced in romantic idioms. Roasted and broiled meat, palm and European wine, whisky, gin and all were served to every one's desire. I must confess, our women could drink! But, I have never seen one act drunk. That sounds incredible. They could become hilarious, but never drunk. As a matter of fact, I had no idea that a woman could get drunk until I went to the United States and saw with my eyes.

Whilst we admit that those permanently placed under the third class were under-privileged, their position was due to their own limited ability. They could change it. If one proved **oneself** able, one must be up-graded. Mgbugo would see to that. If she **failed**, father himself was bound to discover the truth sooner or later. That does not imply that they had no fun and liberty. They enjoyed all the protection I have mentioned above. Every respect due to the *Obi's* wife was accorded to each of them. And any one of them, as had often been the case, could become the mother of the next king, whereas women of the upper crust like Mgbugo herself, might have no child of her own whatsoever.

A person with western cultural outlook may ask me: But did love exist between your father and those eighty wives?" That is a good and pardonable question coming from a westerner. I am only afraid that he may not be ablé to appreciate my direct answer to this question unless he understands the philosophy of love of my

people. A westerner is accustomed to the sentimental dream-nothings in his idea of love. To him love stands as a selfish expression of possessive instinct, of possessing the material and the flesh of one another without an equal emphasis in the union of the soul. No doubt, he talks a lot about the union of the soul in his usual intricate web of words, but at a closer range you discover that his real interest is on the surface compatibility. He eulogises certain spiritual qualities of an ideal marriage, but more often than not, it is full of mask of false nature. Behind the façade of poetic love-edifice, lies the nest of legal tentacles to intimidate and entrap one another into a contractual relationship based on material security on one hand, and fear of deceit on the other. Besides, the emphasis the Westerner lays on mating aspect of love, that is on physical romance as an end, is crude, coarse and animalistic to an African man and woman.

According to the belief of the African, the real woman realized that there were finer and deeper emotions which make marriage holy and enduring. Excessive emphasis on possessiveness was certainly not one of them. Our women were possessive. It is natural for human beings to be possessive, but to them, other things were more important – things like mutual confidence, sympathy, attachment unto death, subtle inner emotional bond which could sublimate undue egotism; a certain vague and yet conscious sense of resignation to one's object of love which knitted two souls together and immortalizes their union. It may be asked, "how many souls has one man who married eighty wives? Is he going to produce eighty souls for the immortal union?" The answer according to Africans was simple. Yes, soul is a belief. Life after death is a belief. The Africans believed that everything you possessed in this world would belong to you in Heaven. If the husband died first, the souls of each wife must go to his soul until the whole eighty wives were completed and he would become the husband of the eighty wives in Heaven. Africans did not believe in heaven where there was no marriage.

In African marriage, the emphasis was not laid on short-lived emotional satisfaction. The emphasis was rather laid on making marriage an enduring institution, thus eliminating empirically all the factors that lead to easy divorce and constant wreckage of the family

life. No need building in the air. Better build an imperfect edifice but with foundations on rock and live there permanently, than to build a beautiful cathedral on sand and at the first blow of the wind, it tumbles to pieces, turning the beautiful and expensive materials into shambles.

It will not therefore be surprising to know that there was a wonderful love-life in a large family of eighty wives. By my American training, I have come to doubt the possibility of that love, but here comes the wonder of it all. When my father died, there were some of his wives between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five who refused to be remarried to other members of the royal family according to the law. They claimed that they loved my father so much that they preferred to honour him with their body and soul from such young years of their lives unto death! That is a great feat in the history of love for any country. It can be seen therefore that to African woman, the emphasis was on the soul, and their resignation is not through oppression.

The *Boston Herald* once wrote: "Harpiari was one of the two wives of a rich villager. When he died, she decided that she would commit suttee, whereby she would immolate herself on her husband's funeral pyre. At the cremation ground she sat on the same bier as her dead husband and herself lit the sandal-wood pile, which formed their altar of love. Several thousand people gathered around and none of these took a prominent part in preventing the village policemen from rescuing the woman from the flames." That woman, as was reported was regarded as "a divine character in the eyes of every Hindu."

This deep sense of the divine is absent in western marriage. Remember that the Hindu woman described above was one of the wives. Not the wife. I wonder how many so called civilized women who assumed that "love" in marriage was their exclusive ideal and practice, would be able to offer their bodies and souls to their "exclusive" objects of love at death. None. The important thing was to look for the insurance policy, bank books, deeds, bonuses from the employers of the deceased and so forth. Once these things were secured for enjoyment, the "deal" of love was considered properly

closed. Not all the westerners are all that mundane and nonchalant. But I talk in generalities, because even in Africa, cases of materialistic wives were not far to point out.

I cannot therefore recommend or condemn polygamy in Africa or anywhere else. I cannot enthrone monogamy in Asia, Europe or America. I do not feel myself sufficiently learned yet for a decisive opinion. The tendency to follow the crowd is always most convenient for those who refuse to think. Serious social instability and public immorality as I have seen it in monogamous societies of Europe and America prevent me from falling to the poetic rhymes of those who sing for the glory of monogamy. Some unfortunate consequences of polygamy in Africa as I have seen it, made it impossible for me to decide in its favour. Anyone who tries to speak with decisive attitude for either, must have deliberately or unconsciously permitted himself to err on the side of his own cultural background, religious fanaticism or selfishness. I leave the conclusion to be drawn by sociologists and perhaps the anthropologists. This was the view I held in my book *Without Bitterness*.[2] I had not improved.

Suffice it to say that I was born and bred in a polygamous household. Life among those women was full of sweetness and diversities. They were married from different principalities and clans. Each one of them, *true to type, was eccentric and unique*. Each had and insisted on her dialect. Each had and served the gods of her own ancestors. They brought into the palace endless variety of mannerisms, ideas and cultures despite their efforts and duty to conform with the customs of Nnewi. To live with them was an exciting episode for a growing child. It looked as if every day was Christmas. Some of them were so beautiful that people from all over the adjacent regions came to the palace to behold them. There was a popular story that one man came all the way to Eke market in Nnewi to behold the sight of those wives who were always under guard. This man deliberately placed himself in a position where his body touched the arm of one of the wives called Olieukwu Nwankwo

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2 A. A. Nwafor-Orizu, Without Bitterness (New York, Creative Age Press, 1994), p. 167.

(of Nwankwo Okoli Udezuka of Arondizuogu). As soon as this man's arm touched her, he ran towards his home town with a great joy, refusing to be touched by any other person. He avoided taking his bath for fourteen days, in order that the touch of that royal's wife would remain as long as possible with him!

The happiest moment of my life among those wives of my father was during festivals. In that season the wives were dressed in their best, with their hair beautifully decorated, ready to dance before my father and some eminent men of the land. They danced with special delicacy and touch fit for their elevated positions. Father was always pleased with them and used to do "foolish" things when those charming wives danced. He would order shooting of guns, throwing money at the wives, popping bottles of expensive drinks and pouring the contents on the ground like water for libation.

But it was not all sugar. With all the age-long organization of the family, there was occasional squabble among the women; with all the avenues for peace, all had not been tranquil. With all the wealth, glamor and affluence, many sighed for having no children; for every piece of joy, there was some cause for sorrow. A child may be born to another woman in the morning, and in the evening a child of another woman may be dead! In a family of eighty wives it would be imposing upon nature to expect a uniform fortune for all. All days could not be democrats for all of them at the same time. It was this endless swinging of life's pendulum, that one man called my father had to adjust his life and expand his interests in minute details while at the same time carrying on the duties of the Government of the state. I doff my hat in respect and awe to him!

Chapter Three

BROTHERS AND SISTERS

> *The happiest moment in my life, was the time I enjoyed my brothers and sisters in the palace. We were all innocent and unsuspecting, enjoying the beauties and ceremonies of our father's resplendent personality.*
>
> ***– Nwafor Orizu.***

We the children, my brothers and sisters lived in a different world of our own according to our age groups. We were not many compared to the number of wives our father had. There were thirty of us, fifteen boys and fifteen girls. We had different mothers. On my mother's side, I had one brother, Okoli.[1] Okoli died in 1937. I became my mother's only son. While it was true that many of us were born of different mothers, the system of living did not encourage division among us despite unconscious jealousies as mentioned before. The degree of brotherly attachment depended on individuals more than on the question of belonging to or not belonging to the same mother. Selfish attachment to mother's side was encouraged by some wicked, jealous and little-minded mothers, and sometimes they did take serious turn against the family solidarity.

Strong-willed children did not listen to their mothers as to whom to befriend and whom to reject among brothers and sisters. Father loved those who did not listen to their mother's "advice" on such lines. I was indeed lucky that my mother was an extremely broad-minded woman with a marked sense of leadership. If I have

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1 My senior sister Ulijanu was born during my mother's first marriage to the ruling house of Umuanyora in Eziora Ozubulu.



My senior sister, Mrs. Ulijeanu Egbuna.

any broad-mindedness, it was my mother who stamped it permanently in me. She hated pettiness in some of her women folk and she avoided gossip, and never allowed me to go in company of such persons who gossiped. She was never once involved in tale-bearing and scandalous cases which were rampant in the palace, and which had involved many wives in heavy fines and other penalties. When her fellow women who were tale-bearers and lovers of scandalous stories visited her, she usually dismissed them discourteously. It was only against such companies that she advised me. I am grateful to her to this day. She advised me always to accept my other brothers and sisters on merit alone, and never on whether one belonged to this or that mother.

To the people outside the palace we were known by a common name: "*Umuazi-Obi*" (children of the palace). But that term, owing to some of our licentious activities, had certain sinister meaning attached to it. To some it was meant to connote rascality, dare-devilry, bullishness, destructive tendency, cleverness, pugnacity and relentless group fighting.

We used to be a terror to the children of our neighbours. We bullied and fought them in group. They were afraid to harm us, I imagine. And we of course, were good at fighting. We used to jump into the garden of our neighbours and plucked pears, stole native tomatoes and if the owner dared to worry us too much, we threw things at him and ran away. To "steal" pears and tomatoes (*Nkpulu anala*) was a common and permissible "theft" among children.

We used to go a swimming. On our way to the stream, we used to pick up fights with other boys and girls who fetched water. On many occasions we broke their water vessels. Some of them would go straight to the *Obi* and report us before our parents who invariably appeased them, and gave them money to purchase new vessels. Sometimes, father would give nice dresses to such boys whom we molested on our way to the stream or to the church.

This bullying habit was so deeply rooted in us that it boomeranged. After the outsiders were bullied, we turned on ourselves. If you happen to be young, or weak, woe unto you. The older and stronger ones would make a prey of you. Nnaji, the eldest

son was a certificated sadist. If the devil got you under his wrath, you were done for. Dėspite Nnaji's bully, he loved me a lot and was always friendly disposed towards me. Onwura, the second son was our father's image with a commanding voice. He was not a bully, but when aroused, he showed no mercy. He could beat you into a pulp, for he had one-track mind in his six-feet, heavy-set frame. Onyenkuzi, the third son was a good athlete, cool – and very calculating. He was as bullying as Nnaji with a lesser degree of sadism, accompanied with some cruel humor and cunning bravado. Our father was very fond of him so was I and that brought two of us into a focus. Nwokeji the fourth son was huge but unaggressive, two of us were specially friendly. He looked like a bull but he was harmless. I was the fifth son. I was not a Joe Louis but I loved to fight and to bully those whom I could. I was rascally, domineering and quarrelsome. I irritated a lot of people and paid the price by always being beaten up. Nwankwo and Ilogbenu who were the sixth and seventh sons respectively were my immediate objects of bully. The rest were too small for our age group. Nwankwo was the Goliath of the family, an intelligent boy with extraordinary engineering ability. He was tallest of all Orizu's children.

All my sisters were fond of me. Those who petted me most were Nwagboluogu, Obianuju, Uduego, Nwanyiakpozinam, Ejeabani and Adaora. They used to give me sweet things and protected me against *Umuazi Obi* bullies. They were full grown girls during that time. We did not belong to the same age group. I was therefore their pet. I never had trouble with them. It was my brothers who made life uncomfortable for me. Sometimes, I ran to those sisters for protection.

My brothers gave me an unconscious training in the development of my individuality. How did they do it? Quite often they ganged together against me. Father was always away or busy. My mother was incurably industrious and was seldom at home, during the day. In the absence of both of them, my brothers got together and called me by my nicknames which made me cry. If I attempted to retaliate they beat me up. I had several nicknames. I had unusually large eyes when I was young. They nicknamed me *Kwakpo* meaning

"Large eyes". Two other nicknames I remember now. One was *Baba-nwelu-ego*. This nick-name was a combination of Yoruba and Ibo words. *Baba* is a Yoruba word for "father" and *nweluego* is simple Ibo word meaning "who has money." *Baba-nwelu-ego* in the sense they used it was a scornful way of telling me: "you have money, we have not, go your way." To me it was terrible to be singled out and called *Baba-nwelu-ego*. One day, they started again to mock me and all of them shouted on me: *Baba-nwelu-ego* because I had an expensive cloth which my mother bought for me, I cried bitterly. Mother, thinking that I was involved in an accident, rushed to the scene. I told her that they nicknamed me *Baba-nwelu-ego*. She laughed rather thoughtfully and showed no sympathy for me. Then she said: "Ah! children are indeed fools, don't you know that they are saying in effect that you are richer than they are? I looked at her puzzled when she continued: "Are you crying because your mother is richer than their mothers?," I wiped my tears quickly and mother held me by my hand and led me into her house. It was long afterwards that I understood the implications of that nickname. Actually mother was the second richest wife of my father, next only to Mgbugo, she was also officially next in rank to Mgbugo of all the wives directly married by father.

The other nickname was *Akwaeke-Onye-Zokpo-Obulu*. The nickname was derived from the fact that my father used to punish anyone who made me cry, severely. Knowing that, I developed a nasty habit of crying to the top of my voice at the slightest provocation, once I knew that my father was around. Consequently, my brothers refrained from provoking me when father was within reach. They would way: He is *Akwaeke-Onye-Zokpo-Obulu*, which means, he is a diamond egg (of his father), one who breaks it bears the consequence." I cannot explain why they always prefer to stand together against me, but I knew for certain that they made me develop an individuality and independence which helped me afterwards. I unconsciously developed a state of mind whereby I derive some pleasure in being opposed by many when I was in the right. And ever since, I have innate sympathy for any person unjustly besieged by a majority.

We always reported each other to our father and to our teachers at school. The best "lawyer" among us was Onyenkuzi. He reported people more frequently than any other. He usually won his case. His nickname was *Igedulu Afo*[2] because as a child, he had a protuberant stomach, dwarfish stature and a big head. One day we went swimming in a fine stream called *Mmili Agbo or Mmili Father*. On top of the hill below which the stream flowed, was a Catholic Mission School, Ibu-Agriga. On our way home a Catholic teacher there called me to his house and gave me some presents including biscuits. Onyenkuzi demanded a lion's share of the biscuits. I refused. He quietly accepted a small portion I gave him, but promised me a packet of revenge.

The next day, he reported me to the school master of the Anglican Church, Otolo (St Thomas). My offence was that as an Anglican Church member, I ought not to enter into the Catholic Mission, to say nothing of accepting gifts from their teacher. Our C. M. S. teacher got hold of me and gave me four good strokes of cane and dragged me into an empty room of his bungalow which was a sort of a "penitentiary" for religious offenders. I was thrown into that room after school. I had no lunch. I sat on the cold cement floor. For the first time in my life I found myself in a lifeless atmosphere. Not an insect was there. The windows and the doors were locked against me.

Perhaps the teacher thought that I understood, but I did not know why I was imprisoned. I knew nothing about religious intolerance of European Christians. I hardly comprehended the difference between the protestant and the catholic churches. The Catholic teacher who gave me the gifts never mentioned Catholicism to me. He only indicated his fondness for me, and told me to come and take biscuits whenever I go swimming. I was too young to understand any doctrine with discrimination. Tears trickled down my eyes, but I was too irate at the gross injustice. How my brother realized he could get me so punished by reporting me to the school master for something as innocent as accepting a gift, I did not know.

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2 Igedulu-Afo, means protruded stomach.

Sometime later, I became restless not only by hunger but by a presence of nature's call. I wanted to urinate. I had made noise previously, but no one cared. This time, I heard the voices of some Church Committee members who had a conference at the verandah of that building. I made up my mind to compel their attention. I therefore started to urinate on the floor of the room. The urine made some splattering noise. But the noise became more noticeable when I flunged the urine on the door. It sounded as if someone had suddenly poured water on the door. The committee members wanted to know who was inside that "penitentiary." They were alarmed and told the teacher to escort me home immediately before any body took notice of what had happened. But they told me to promise them that I would never enter into a Catholic mission all my life. I promised. But I never kept that promise when I became a man. Rather I love the Catholic the more: Ironically, this Catholic teacher at St. Joseph's, Okofia during my infant days was an assistant chief warder in the Port Harcourt prison when Onyenkuzi and myself became inmates in the prisons. His name was Mr. Okeke from Ogidi. He knew the history of my father and family and was fully aware of the popular son Nwafor. It was he who came to me and asked whether I had forgotten that he gave me biscuits at Okofia, Otolo, Nnewi when I was an infant. This concept was a part of my inner inspiration to fight against political or religious imperialism.

I loved to fight with my brothers and sisters at least half dozen times a day. There were three special fights which taught me good lessons.

The first fight was against my junior brother Nwankwo. Nwankwo was a slender, war-like, tall son of the beautiful Princess, Ogbenyeanu Ezeoke, my father's wife from Amichi, and the senior daughter of the *Obi* of Amichi. A spoilt boy from the cradle, highly withdrawn, dangerously paradoxical, Nwankwo as a boy lived in a world of blown-up myth. Too much material protection, sustained by his mother's myth of his being an unusual child made him almost unable to follow up our father's rules. For example, Nwankwo loathed running errands and was never punctual in performing his domestic duties.

One day our father was away to the law court. We were all required to sweep a portion of the *Obi* and to put fire in certain fire-places and not to remain in our mothers' houses till father returned. We all performed our duties except Nwankwo. He was in his mother's house as he often did and refused to move. I decided to force him out. It was an excuse to bully him. I ran to his mother's house and told him to come with me to the hall to sweep his portion of the floor. He refused. As I advanced to drag him, he ran away into a small room and picked a sharp knife and flung it at me. The pointed end of the knife penetrated into my right ear and cut a deep wound. Blood rushed out. I was afraid to pursue him further. I was ashamed to cry aloud, but I cried. I felt that Nwankwo had committed an offence for which father ought to punish him severely.

Father returned in the evening. I walked up to him promptly with an air of assurance of a person with a big case. Here was my junior brother who absented himself from the duties of the hall. That was charge number one. I went to drag him out from his mother's house, he cut me with a knife. That was the number two charge. My evidence was the wound mark in the ear. Before I ended my last sentence, a terrific order came from my father: "Shut your mouth, and get out from my sight before I....! Are you such a coward that you were unable to drag Nwankwo from his mother's house to the hall because he used knife? Do you now come to ask me to help you fight him? When he used his knife, why didn't you revenge? Get out!" I was remorseful and ashamed, but I learnt my lessons. I must not let people take advantage of me and get away with it, trusting my parents to do the fighting for me.

Then came another fight. This time was against my senior brother Onyenkuzi. We attended the kindergarten school inside the *Obi*. The building of the school was near an ancient and venerable *Udala* tree. Onyenkuzi was in Class III or Bible Class, which means that he could read the New Testament in Ibo. I was in *Aba Ego* which means I could read an Ibo text book called *Azundu* which contained Ibo alphabets, and short Ibo sentences. Onyenkuzi had an Ibo Bible – the New Testament. I had an *Azundu*. They were both new text books bought for us by our father.

One day after the close of the school, Onyenkuzi and I were returning from the school. One ripe Udala fruit fell from the *Udala* tree near the school. I was fortunate to pick it first. In *Umuazi-Obi* style of bully, Onyenkuzi demanded the *Udala* with an excuse that although I picked it first, he first saw it when it was falling down from the tree. That, in his opinion gave him the right of ownership. To him, I only picked something that belonged to him. "You are officious!" he said.

Remembering what my father said in case of my junior brother Nwankwo, I refused to surrender my *Udala*. There was a fight. He grabbed my *Azundu* and tore a part of it. I was enraged. I had to revenge. I got hold of his Ibo Bible and tore it into shreds. He cried aloud with alarm, threatening that father would punish me for destroying a Bible. I said to myself: if father did not touch my junior brother for using knife on me, how could he punish me for destroying a Bible in revenge for my destroyed *Azundu?* When two of us were marched to our father, I was upheld. Father said that I did well to avenge for my own text book. He ordered for new text books for both of us. I learnt another lesson. To fight back against someone who used to bully you makes him become afraid of you and leave you alone. After that affair, my senior brother was not as keen as he used to be in ordering me around. I also learned that the Bible was a book, a holy book but that God did not live inside it.

There came my last boyhood fight. It was with my older sister Nwanyibuzo. I have mentioned that I was the pet of my sisters. Whenever I picked a quarrel with them, they treated me kindly and never as harsh as my senior brothers. I learned to take advantage of it. This time Nwanyibuzo refused to give me a piece of roast mutton. My first cousin Mgbocha Ezeoke, who also loved me gave me some. Nwanyibuzo snatched it away from me. I followed her wherever she went. Mgbocha demanded the piece of meat from her and gave it back to me, but I threw it to the ground and still followed Nwanyibuzo, crying. Father, who was standing in a distance, saw me harassing my sister, when we came nearer to him he told me to leave my sister alone, and promised me a fresh roast meat. I refused. He then told my sister to fight back if I dared touch her

again. That was putting fire in a petrol can. My sister was as fast as a hawk. Her nickname was "hawk." She flashed me down to the ground and held me there, preventing enough air to get through my nose. I started to cry, but father told her not to release me until I promised that I would not touch her again when freed. He said he knew me, and that if I was not forced to make that promise, I might fight again when released. At first I refused to apologize, but when the suffocation become unbearable, I surrendered "Unconditionally." Everybody there laughed at me, and I was ashamed of myself. I learned from there never to fight except in defence against anyone whom I knew could beat me. Again, had I known, (which always comes last), I would have accepted "a deal" for a fresh roast meat from my father, than to insist on vengeance, and lost all face as well as all the meat.

These were good lessons in themselves. I guess that every child has to go through a certain period of living in a fancied world. He is guarded and loved until he learns that this world is an open battlefield where everyone must at least forge his own shield. One day either by the design of a wise parent or by accident of distance or death, his house of refuge will be removed and he will find himself in merciless hands, unprotected. Then he will cry a little, and if he be brave, he awakes his own powers of resistance and forges ahead into the world by his own decisions. I guess that that was what my father wanted me to learn.

But was there only fights among ourselves as brothers and sisters?, of course not. For a greater part of our time, we lived an interesting life which was exclusively ours. We used to hunt squirrels, *Ogini*, *Odu*, some grasshoppers we called *Ukpana*. We roasted and ate some of them. One of the pleasantest moments of our life was when we mimicked our father in his royal role. Each brother or sister had a particular role to play. One would be made the *Obi* – our father. A sister would be Mgbugo. Another boy would be a head messenger and so forth. We built a new compound with sand walls and made roof with leaves and grasses. We cooked make-believe food with stones and wood. We used insects which we hunted for cattle. We tied some very thin threads on those insects and drew

them around as if they were oxen and sheep, in the same way our father's cattle were led around the green fields. Sometimes, we celebrated a mock festival of *Ofala* (King's Appearance Day). We made guns out of hollow stems of pawpaw twigs, and when we shot them into the sky we made sound with our mouth "gboom" – that was the gun sound. We made elephant tusks out of pawpaw stems. We carved the hollow branch open from the middle, cut one end of it open, then it gives a loud sound when blown with the mouth. That was our trumpet. For telephones we used empty cigarette cans and thread. We made a hole at the bottom of each of the two empty cigarette cans. A long thread is attached to the hole of each can and they were separated poles apart, one person standing on each end talking to the other. We built automobiles for our mock *Obi*. We used hollowed coconut stem for the four wheels and all other parts were made out of wood, joined by either nails or ropes. The *Obi* sat on the "Car" and the servants pushed or drew the "Car" sometimes very fast.

Our mock king had his own court and police. Offenders were tried and punished. Sometimes, when the king's servants attempted to inflict punishment, fighting ensued and the whole court and the palace, the king, the queen, and all their mock glory would be trampled to the ground ending that era in our boyhood history. We waited for another era and another kingdom to rise again another day.

Our life in the palace was properly organized. Feeding, sleeping, working, playing, must all be done in a group. The wealth and functions of our mothers were not the same. Each was allowed to eat in his mother's house, but there was a central feeding place where everyone was compelled to feed no matter how much a mother had fed one. There was a special woman whose job was to cook for the entire children. After she cooked, a special servant would transport the food to our father's dining chamber – *Galungalu*. There the food would remain until it was time for our father to eat. A special steward would come and share the food among us.

I do not know, but it appeared to me that father deliberately selected bad cooks among his wives to cook our general meals, with

the result that our central feeding was always a terror for some of us whose mothers were known to be excellent cooks. My mother cooked for my father for some time before she became too busy with her own economic enterprises, and other general family and state duties, being next to Mgbugo, to be just a cook. Some of us therefore only ate from the central feeding place for fear of our father.

Apart from the central feeding, father used to share the remnant of his own meals to us at the end of each meal. That was the climax of our pleasure at each meal time. We used to stand in a queue, not only his own children, but our cousins such as Mbabuotolo Ofodile, Ikechukwu Ojji, Anuamadi Ezeoke and Ugbodayi Ezeoke now Mrs. Mercilina Okonkwo. After this, everybody was satisfied for the day and it was time for our exclusive life once more.

We slept together at *Agba-Iyi* (Treaty Chamber). No male child from the age of three upwards was permitted to sleep in his mother's house. Sometimes, there were more than half dozen fights before dawn. Sometimes, one would complain that another breathed into his ears. They would fight until some servant ran to disband them.

Early every morning, everything was done to time. There was a rising bell. As soon as this rang, it was 6.30 a. m., it meant that our father was up from bed and getting ready to appear soon. Now every one of us had a portion of the palace yard to sweep. There was also a portion of the hall to sweep. These must be done promptly after the rising bell had been rung. Servants got ready. Native Administrative Police or messengers wore their uniforms ready for father's appearance. Musicians began to praise him and call him names, recalling all the names of our noble ancestors' and their heroic deeds, and asking God to give the *Obi* a new vigor to continue like the heroes of old.

At 8.00 a.m., the "coming out bell" would ring. Father won't at once appear at the *Obi*. There were official and unofficial days. On official days, he would at once check workers and assign persons to some duties, and turn back to *Galungalu* for breakfast. In the meantime, the driver had got the car ready for driving father to the

court. Then we the children would disperse to our mother's houses and from thence to our school at *Ukwu-Udala* inside the palace.

So was my life rolling merrily in the *Obi*. There was absolute protection. I thought then that life was all flower and sun; that our palace was the centre of the universe; that my father, true to tradition, was another god below the sky.

Thinking of those childhood days among my loving brothers and sisters, and my parents, I remember the autobiography of Annie Bessant where she completely expressed my actual feeling for the present when she wrote: "So guarded and shielded had been my childhood and youth from every touch of pain and anxiety that love could bear for me, that I never dreamed that life might be a heavy burden, save as I saw it in the poor I was sent to help; all the joys of those happy years I took, not ungratefully I hope, but certainly with as glad unconsciousness of anything rare in it as I took the sunlight .... It makes the ordinary roughness of life come with stunning shock, when one goes out into the world .... Yet it is a fair thing to have that joyous youth to look back upon, and at least it is a treasury of memory that no thief can steal in the struggles of later life."

I say this because while my father sat on the top of his world, while he won honours from enemies and friends, while, without any formal education he won the respect of the British Raj, and enjoyed their commendation, he did not live long. At the height of his power, youth and popularity, at the time when he was getting ready to honour an invitation from Buckingham Palace by King George the V, a terrible and melancholic death snatched him away, and there was an eclipse of the moon – metaphorically and literally.

On August 10, 1924, or thereabout, astronomers may remember that there was an eclipse of the moon seen at least in Equatorial Africa. That night my father left the world. Death did not just come and grab him. The stars of the heaven gave him a salute even as Shakespeare said:

> *When beggars die there are no comets seen.*
> *The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.*

I may be accused of sentimentality or of exaggeration. But remember that I am writing what the people of Nnewi said and believed and told. I am not writing out of my own made-up history. I was too young in 1924. I am therefore writing people's own concept and interpretation of the demise of one of their greatest *Obis* since the beginning of their history.

I saw my father when he first fell ill. A few days after-wards it was serious. And we the children never saw him again. He was removed to *Acholu* (the most exclusive part of the Chamber). He was ill for ten days. It took over a month before it was announced. But we the children knew nothing about it. He had no grown son. My most senior brother – the heir apparent, was attending a secondary school at Hope Waddel Calabar. That was his first year. Few things were spoken of in Nnewi with more fearful whispering than the rumor of my father's death.

Mother knew. She tried to tell me but I did not understand her. She would call me secretly into the room where nobody was and whispered "*Nwafor nwam, bia ka m gwa gi, imakwo na ibuluna ogbenye enwero nna*?" Meaning, "Nwafor my son, come let me tell you. Do you know you are now semi-orphan – fatherless?" As I did not get the point, I would leave her with all smiles and rushed away. I wonder now how tragically lonely mother was considering the love she had for him.

One Sunday morning, the leaders of the State gathered in the *Obi*. I remember Chief Solomon Ubezuonu, Michael Okafor, Ezeanasomba, Ezeogbutu, Ezenukwu, Daniel Okoli, Ezeugbogu, Ezeotubelu, Thomas Ulasi and a host of others.

Their countenance was sad. Young men were clad with their sheathed sword of war belted to their hips. They were being sent to many areas of Iboland and some parts of Nigeria with admonition: "*Je gwa ha na igwe anyidalu*" – meaning, go and tell them that our heaven has fallen. I did not know that my father was already gone. We just kept on playing. We missed him but we were being fed as usual, and at the end of each meal, some food – purported to have been a remnant of father's meal was brought and given to

us, with a promise that he said he would soon come out. So we were expecting him.

Then came the fateful day which I shall never forget. The FUNERAL DAY of the *Obi*. Eighty wives turned into mourning. That morning was dark as night in Nnewi and environs. The palace was decorated. The flag of the state was hung low all over the nooks and corners of the state to show that Nnewi was mourning. The *Enete* was decorated. The coffin was there. Mgbugo was the chief mourner among the wives. Guns and cannons boomed into the air and the land was shaking, with the incessant sound of the booming cannons. People wept, and wept and wept. There was no comforter. trumpeters, fluters, lyric singers, women singers all yelled and beat their hearts in vain. Death is subversive, its act irrevocable.

But did we the children know its significance then? Of course not. There was one singer from Ekwulumili called Mbamalu. He was one of our father's musicians. That day he came where four of us sat and began to cry and sing poetically with his hands on his head:

"Nke kachanu bu na Umazi
Amaro onye mulu fa-a-a"

Interpreted in English means: "The most tragic of this death is that the children do not know who gave birth to them." He appeared comical to us because his voice was trembling and his face thoroughly covered with tears. We laughed at him. Our careless laughter made every observer to cry some more. It is now that I come to realize what an ironical occasion we provided for the inconsolable "oldsters."

That was the end of our merry life as the sons of the *Obi*. From now on the story of each of us with an exception of the eldest son, was a story of struggle for existence, of hard life, insecurity and courageous affront on life. Some came out victorious. Some succumbed on the wayside of life's highway. Not that we all ran into the wild world at once. I personally did not make a single move. Mother was too courageous to permit panic. But some mothers left the palace with their sons a year or two after father died, when our eldest brother became cruel and intolerable because of his inexperience.

We believe in destiny and reincarnation. The question of reincarnation played a role even in lives of the children. For example, Onyenkuzi was a reincarnation of Okafor İ, our great grandfather. Nwokeji was a reincarnation of Atuegwu, one of the sons of Okafor I. I was a reincarnation of Ezeugboghalu (Okeke Mgbafor). Nwankwo was a reincarnation of Ezeoruchalu, our great uncle. It appeared that all of us used to behave like all those persons attributed to us. But it was not quite so. Nwankwo was the only one who really behaved like Ezeoruchalu – always belligerent, violent, tumultuous. Ezeoruchalu, the father of Ezeinyim and Akwujiuba was a thunder of a man. History had it that he was a great war general and he devastated many cities and principalities in his war exploits. This Nwankwo my junior brother always did violent things. In any fight he would carry a knife. He once set fire to the house of his aunt Inyan Ezeoke who was one of my father's wives. The house burnt down. That was the first and last I saw fire burn a house in the palace. It was attributed to his reincarnation, and nothing was done to him.

I personally had one strange feeling since I was born. I do not know how that feeling came about, but any time I saw my father, I felt I was his double. Whenever I saw him, I felt I was beholding myself. I never thought we two could occupy the space of existence on this earth at the same time. But it was all subconscious. Then after sometime, not quite after my twelve years of age, that was long after my father died, I had a strange feeling of being an older man. I often felt that I was a very old man who had come and gone and come again into this world with past achievements in other worlds. I never for once considered any of my brothers belonging to my real spiritual age group except in an external mortal form. Knowing that I was my father's double I had come to accept all my brothers as my children. I have never told them, but my natural and spiritual response to any of them had been that of an older man. When any of them seemed to act as if we were just brothers, I felt surprised deep inside of me, though not angry.

Instead of my being angry against any such brother, I would rather think myself stupid. For how in the world could I expect,

say, my senior brothers to even begin to nurture the idea of being my own sons? But this was a feeling which followed me from childhood into adolescence. Not only toward my brothers that I had that feeling but toward anyone who hailed from Nnewi. Sometimes, I perceived clearly in my consciousness where I saw myself in the past several centuries somewhere I knew not. The idea that I was not young was something that gripped me, and in which I believed as a man believed in God from the time I could think. I therefore naturally resented any physically older person calling me a young man, but sometimes, external custom and tradition made me acquiesce.

And yet, paradoxically, because my father died when I was young, I developed an inordinate desire for a father-substitute even from among my own older brothers. I wanted so much to have my older sisters pet me, and they petted me. Nevertheless, the desire to father them continued to pervade my life.

My life with my brothers and sisters was a joy to me. It was an old small world with strange paradoxes. To reflect that life is like going back to paradise lost. Then hills and mountains, the valleys and deep seas of life have all formed a barricade between that past stage and the present. It will never be regained. But its sweet memories linger, its affection remains, for anything well-begun is half-done.

Chapter Four

CHILD MARRIAGE AND HOLY NWEJE

My meeting with Holy Nweje made me to confirm once more, that righteous men are not disclaimers. They are always detached and hesitate to condemn. So was Christ the father of Christianity.

– Nwafor Orizu.

Child marriage was part of our own culture. Parents considered it a matter for pride to plan early marriages for their young children. There were some cases where parents planned marriages for babies in the womb. When a certain woman, say Mrs. Oti, became pregnant, another family, say Mr and Mrs Ndu, might have a male child named Oko. The Ndu family would inform Mrs. Oti that if her baby in the womb were to be born a girl, she would become Oko's wife. Every one would be on the lookout for Mrs. Oti's delivery. If the baby turned to be a female, Mrs. Oti would send a word to Ndu's family. The Ndus would in turn rush to the scene with a new water basin made of clay called *Oku-Mili*. If the Oti family permitted their new-born babe to be fed water from that clay basin, that was an act of accepting a marriage contract between the young Oko and the new born baby girl. Except through an act of legitimate divorce, the two babies were tied to each other for life.

The reverse could be true. Wives could be married for a male baby yet in the womb. If after the contract, the baby turned to be a female, those wives should wait till their prospective mother-in-law

gave birth to a male. Such marriage took place in aristocratic families. That was the case with me.

Before I was born, several girls were married awaiting my arrival. They were five, to be exact. Before I was five years old, their number increased to ten. They were:

1. Nwalue from Ezekwuabo, Otolo, Nnewi
2. Nwagbala from Ichida
3. Onukaliba from Nnewichi, Nnewi
4. Mgbogo Ubu from Umuanuka, Otolo, Nnewi
5. Iruka from Ihembosi
6. Ozimife from Azia
7. Mboma from Ozubulu
8. Nwangbogo Uduagu from Utuh
9. Onwuji from Oraifite
10. Enwelerie from Ununnealam, Umudim, Nnewi

Naturally, as I was growing, I had no notion of what a wife meant. There were also several maid servants of my mother, and I did not know any difference between them and my "wives".

Of the ten wives, four were of my age group. One of them, Nwalue daughter of Dala Nwitepu of Ezekwuabo, Otolo, Nnewi, was born on the same day I was born. Her mother was a good friend of my mother. Both of them became pregnant at the same time. The two families decided that I shall marry Nwalue if I were a male and she a female. So it happened, and *Oku-Mili* ceremony was performed. Two of us grew like a brother and a sister. I was specially fond of her. She was pretty and playful. We used to swim together at Achitta stream, and mother loved her too. Two of us ate together at times. The other full grown women who still passed for my wives used to pet and respect me. They gave services for the asking. Whenever I returned to the house one or two of them would meet me at the door leading to mother's compound, they would pick me up and remove my dresses. Each of them would cook a nice dish and give me.

I must first eat from mother's delicious dish and each wife would be happy for me to taste her own dish after I shall have

eaten my mother's. They always tempted me to over-feeding. But I was a light eater.

I started early as a Christian. My parents sent me to the Anglican Church where my early life was influenced. I was taught that polygamy was bad, that marriage was not even something so good. I learnt how Delilah betrayed Sampson and how Eve seduced Adam. I began early to look upon women with suspicion according to the Old Testament version of history. From my earliest consciousness of being a thinking person the moral principles of the lives and examples of great men had a strange hold on me. I always felt that women were synonymous with lust, deceit, frivolity and weakness – all of which impeded achievement. And I love to achieve. I looked upon women as the greatest enemies of truly great men. Christ did not marry, I was told. Some priests never married. I concluded therefore, that there must be something wrong with women.

When water is plentiful we waste it. I loathed women from childhood partly because too many of them were thrust upon me too early, and partly because of Christian indoctrination. To my mother, I was a rebel because I often told her that I wanted those wives to return to their parents since I was not prepared to marry a single one of them. She kept me under control for a while, but as soon as I was old enough, I became restive. It came to a point where I was able to talk to those women directly. Now and then, I told them to return to their families for I was not prepared to marry them. That was a most offensive and an embarrassing piece of statement to an African woman. I did not realize.

My mother continued to call me a fool for my lack of appreciation for what she did for me..

She did not realize that most of my boyhood companions whom I met at the missionary school came from poor families, and some under Christian influence, they often made me feel odd when they condemned child marriage or polygamy. That made me ashamed among them, although I never considered those women my wives.

Finally, all those wives left my home except four of them who refused to go. Those four were very much attached to my mother sentimentally. They were among the older ones who had come before

I was born. They themselves, like mother, considered me just as an immature fool and did not attach much importance to my pronouncements. They ignored my rantings and continued to be kind, generous and serviceable. And I enjoyed their kindness and liked them for it. But I paid the price for being a "husband."

By 1929 I was not yet baptized. I was in the fourth standard of elementary school which belonged to the Anglican Church. It was obligatory that missionaries must baptize all their pupils. We were required to attend Sunday school and Church morning classes and to pay class fees of four shillings per annum. I belonged to Saint Thomas Church, Otolo, Nnęwi. Towards the end of the year, Reverend J. Amobi examined us for baptism. Those who passed would be baptized. The questions were so easy that I was sure of success. But when the result appeared, my name was not in the list of the successful candidates.

Rumor had it that my name was in the original list of the successful candidates sent by the Reverend gentleman, but that it was removed by the members of the Church Committee of St. Thomas Church, Otolo, Nnewi. The reason was unknown, but I was not taking the defeat lying down. I knew I was performing my duties toward the church. I attended morning classes regularly. I paid my fees. I was an ardent chorister.

I was one of the leaders among the boys in keeping the church premises clean every Friday. I therefore went before the Church Committee Members during one of their meetings. I told them of my surprise to have failed in the examination. As I was already prejudiced by the rumor of their act, my address to them could not be described as humble. But I had not the slightest idea of why they withheld my name, according to the rumor.

The Committee members were prompt to tell me why. One of them, Henry Moka, made himself a spokesman. He said: "Nwafor, you failed because we heard that you have many wives in your mother's house." I was struck dumb. And before I said anything, another one Christopher Anwatu interjected: "Yes, is it true, and what are those wives doing in your mother's house?" "Whose wives?" I asked. Henry Moka retorted sharply: "Your wives!" As

he said this, the hair on my head uncoiled and stood up. Some kind of darkness covered my vision. I lost the sense of place. I did not know where I stood or before whom I spoke, but I remember saying: "You devils. You destroyers of God's spirit. You gray-haired men devoid of commonsense. You insincere bogus committee, why put into my head something I do not entertain nor understand? Are you people not old enough to appreciate my innocence in the matter of the women in mother's house? Do you want me to suffer for my parents' act? I must leave you and go. I don't care about your baptism, and don't care if I am never baptized."

I left them abruptly, and while I was running down the steps, some of them shouted: "Come back Nwafor," but I did not look behind me. The next day, one of them John Jiagbogu met me and suggested that I ought to get ten shillings and one fowl from another. He would take them to other Committee members and persuade them to put my name among the successful candidates.

He also advised that I ought to appear before the Committee again and apologise to them and he could entreat them to change their mind. I dismissed his overtures with utter disregard. But I continued to serve in the Church as before.

What infuriated me most was the manner in which my mother's personal life was dragged into the matter. "What are those wives doing in your mother's house?" – This question seemed to me as a personal affront against my mother, and I felt that the members of the Committee had no right to go that far because I happened to be a church member. Mother was not a Christian, and her position in the state was high, I therefore felt that they insulted mother while persecuting me. A new attitude was awakened in me. It appeared to me as if they were punishing me merely because they felt ill-disposed toward the upper class and its culture. Most Christians then were not the members of the upper class in the society. And from what had happened, I felt that they were corrupt, small, petty fellows, who were using Christian Churchianity as a secret weapon to avenge their pent-up grievances against the upper class. That was my honest feeling. Hence I was abruptly converted into absolute sympathy with my mother. From that time on I decided never to

ask the remaining wives to go away. I began to appreciate them, though inwardly, there could not be any personal affection to suggest marriage, even when I showed no more outward resentment for their being called my "wives." I hated to be victimized for a thing I did not do, and I was enervated by the threats of the Committee. "Why must they threaten me?" I asked myself. I was therefore not baptized in 1929. I remained outside of the Christian fold when other boys of my age were admitted.

That was a penalty I had to pay for being a husband. Boys were proud of baptism, not because all of them felt its spiritual value, but because it was a matter for glamour. Boys loved English or Jewish names as a sign of being civilized. For example, when Obiefuna was baptized, his name may be changed to Jonathan. The name Jonathan, he thought, marked him out as a different person from his fellow Africans. He felt more civilized, or emancipated and of course, a better person than those with African names.

At the end of the year, I decided to go away from my home town to another place. By January, 1930 I registered in the fifth standard of an elementary school (Onitsha Central School) in Onitsha. My class teacher was Reuben Okwuosa of Ogidi. I wanted to take my people by surprise by being baptized at the Onitsha Christ Church. I attended the Church Classes and Sunday Schools and paid my church dues. One day Reverend H. O. Nweje summoned us for baptismal examination. When I came Nweje looked at me and asked:

Nweje: "What is your name?"

I: "Nwafor Orizu."

Nweje: "Are you from Nnewi?"

I: "Yes Sir."

Nweje: "Why were you not baptized in Nnewi?"

I: Without hesitation I said, "the Committee stated that there are many wives in my mother's house". Nweje observed that I was shedding little tears.

Nweje: "No! No! No! you will be baptized. I am giving you your result. Do not be angry with these Committee Members. They do not understand you, my son". I waited for Nweje to ask me questions, he said to me:

Nweje: "My son, you have passed, you don't need to answer questions. Go home and get two men and one woman for your baptism." He would not wait for the entire result to appear to tell me that I was successful. He condemned the Otolo Church Committee.

Rev. H. O. Nweje, who was popularly known as "Holy Nweje" was Simon-pure. His character had a pure gold quality. His idea of Christianity was saintly, and he was saintly, and he was one of the most spiritual personages we have known in the world. His detachment and sympathy towards people was household talk. He was austere and ascetic in stoic tradition. My meeting with him increased my faith in Christianity and restored me from nervous shock I got from the treatment of the Otolo Committee. *Righteous men are not disclaimers. They are always detached and they hesitate to condemn*. Rev. Nweje's act reminded me of Christ and the Pharisees in the story of a harlot woman. Sinners demanded a condemnation of another sinner, whereas a holy man said: "I do not condemn you; go and sin no more." I got baptized in the Christ Church, Onitsha in 1930 by Holy Nweje. My class teacher Reuben Okwuosa, in Class 5B, Sam Ibeto class teacher of 5A and Mrs. Solomon Ubaezuonu Mkparu of Otolo Nnewi, were my God-parents. Honestly, at this my mature age, I feel very proud that my initiation into the Christian fold was performed by a holy personage of all time I consider it personally significant that my disappointment at St. Thomas Church was no accident but one of those divine devices in my life. Incidentally, I happen to learn that this practice still pervades in the Anglican Church.

My penalties for child marriage did not stop with victimization by the Otolo Committee. The most resentful aspect of child marriage was that those "wives" were permitted to bear children in the name of their legal husband who was yet a child, several such children were born to me and I was supposed to be their "father."

Shortly after my departure to Onitsha Central School in 1930, something happened. One of those women, Nwangbogo who was married from Utuh town in Nnewi district found her female child

very ill. The child's name was Nwodu, eighteen months old. She was a lovely, charming child, with yellow complexion and sparkling eyes. She died suddenly. Burial ceremonies in Africa were usually performed by the entire family. There were no undertakers. When a child like that dies, the males arranged everything including the burial.

Women simply wept while men comforted them. But when Nwodu died, my senior brother, who took my father's place gave an order that no one should enter into my mother's compound which was within the palace. My mother who was a widow, with the remaining four women sat mournfully with the corpse of a dead child.

Incredible but true. While I was in Onitsha that morning of the event, my feeling was not bright. I had some dream the previous night and something urged me to go home and see mother. It was on a Friday and I had to go to school. I was in the class by 9a.m., and after the first lesson, I stole myself away from the school. I managed to join a passenger lorry for seven pence from Onitsha to Nnewi, (fifteen miles). There was a search for me in the school. Nobody knew where I had gone.

Our lorry was not in a good mechanical condition. After six miles ride, we came atop the steepy Idemili hill. The car started to "shoot guns" from the exhaust pipe. Smoke covered the road from the back of the lorry. All passengers were excited and some exclaimed that the lorry was under fire. The vehicle was still moving grudgingly when some passengers began to jump out. There was panic. I became afraid and while attempting to jump down a six-inch sharp nail cut deep into the back of my right knee, the skin was opened, almost exposing the bone. I dropped by the road side and yelled and remonstrated, blaming myself for having left school and my teacher inorder to visit my mother for no purpose, only to be involved in an accident.

The lorry stopped few poles away and picked those of us who jumped out. Some were seriously wounded. First aid treatment was crudely applied and I was able to walk but with difficulty. The lorry was repaired and in a few minutes I got home. As I walked into

the palace, I heard a strange heart-breaking voice of my mother, crying and uttering pathetic words indicating that she was a suffering widow, calling my departed father's name in an agonizing plea for him – the dead – to come and behold and rescue his beloved and faithful wife from the oppressive hands of a son who had no respect for sacred things that the dead had left behind!

I did not believe my ears. I could not understand the whole affair. The palace atmosphere was ice cold in ominous silence. Everybody was withdrawn and I saw nothing to indicate the usual gaiety characteristic of the *Obi*. I walked into my mother's compound with my wounded leg and found her with a dead child resting on her laps. Mother's tears were running all over the corpse and four faithful women were sitting beside the lonely woman weeping. When they saw me, they raised their voices and wept more bitterly with plaintive gestures. It was a sight best imagined than described. My blood ran cold. The *Obi* was still quiet. Other father's wives who were prevented from entering into mother's house remained in their respective houses murmuring and weeping, but not aloud. All I learnt was that an order was given preventing men from arranging the funeral and forbidding women from joining mother in her mourning.

I did not ask why. I showed no emotion. Controlled tears nearly dropped from my eyes. I remained baffled at the sight of the cold and stiff corpse of an innocent and angelic child on my mother's laps. Mother said I should go out and get some elder persons to help me. I could get none because of my brother's order. At last an elderly cousin, Nwokeke Ezeotubelu, and my uncle Ozobialu Iwuchukwu offered to defy the order and help arrange the burial. Ozobialu got the coffin. He boldly brought the coffin into mother's house and helped me put the corpse into the coffin. Nwokeke offered to dig the grave. By this time it was already late in the evening.

According to our custom, a corpse may not be carried through a door. We were therefore obliged to arrange to transmit the coffin atop the outer wall of the *Obi* which was about twelve feet high. At 7.30 p. m., Ozobialu went outside the *Obi* to the back of the wall from where to receive the coffin. He gave a sign to where he

was standing. Mother got ladder for me, and with the help of those women, I carried the coffin up the ladder to the top of the wall from where it was gradually handed to Ozobialu through the help of another ladder. Then I ran out to meet him. I took the coffin back from him and carried it on my head to the grave yard which was one mile away at Akwudo family land near *Udo na Egbo*. It was now very dark, about 9.00 p.m. There stood Nwokeke, Ozobialu and I and the coffin and no one else. No priest, no mourners, no sisters, no brothers, no friends, no sympathisers, and no enemies either. As if the dead child had committed abomination, or as if she was an outcast without a right to be accorded an honourable exit from the world, Innocent Nwodu was buried in darkness and in loneliness, in a grave surrounded by mumbling leaves of Araba trees. The humid isolated atmosphere of that grave yard, its emptiness, weighed on my young nerves and made the place a scene of horror.

Yes, Ozobialu and Nwokeke helped me bury Nwodu in darkness and under "hush hush" as though we were thieves. It was at this grave yard that I eased my emotion. I sobbed with a heavy heart. Tears trickled my uncle's eyes, while my own tears rolled extravagantly. Nwokeke tried to comfort me when he questioned: "Are you not a man? I know you are a small child, a boy, but the gods have destined you with a man's responsibility. Don't you know that a real person does not show it when he is hurt?" I cleaned my eyes. We walked home. The two men parted and I walked back to the *Obi* in darkness.

Mother and the four women who never ate for the past twenty four hours were there waiting for me. I asked for food and urged them to eat. Mother did not eat. After the dinner, I asked mother why my brother gave the order. She explained. It was a part of the story of child marriage: the story of internal jealousies rooted in a polygamous family. It descended from women to their children. My senior brother, during his early years, was a born sadist to start with. He said according to my mother, "let that woman who considered herself a man bury the dead as a man would."

I was too young to question either my mother or my brother. But I was conscious enough to resent the whole affair. I was unhappy for being called the father of a child of another's blood. I detested the cruelty and sadism inflicted upon my mother. Fear, bitterness, a feeling of being a semi-orphan, a sense of belonging to the wilderness or realization that my mother and I were neither wanted nor cared for by the elderly brother who was a father-substitute: all this does not and cannot explain my distress which had in it some element of frustration and agony, when I watched my senior brother crushing my mother's life out of her.

I found it difficult to reconcile the cruelty of such a social system which left my lovely and gorgeous mother at the mercy of the graceless and ungrateful brother who was not content with enjoying the wealth of my father which he did not accumulate, but bent on destroying all the good symbols and sign posts of adoration and glory cherished and left by a great traditional ruler.

At that time there was not a single woman who had a male child for my father that was left in the compound. Each woman and her male child had been forced out of the palace. This made my loneliness and agony a dismal experience. Why my mother chose to lay down her life this way to be crushed beyond endurance when all her fellow wives had run back to their homes with their male children, my brothers, I could not understand. I did not persuade her to go to Ozubulu her home because my senior brother and I were very friendly, for he liked me a lot and unlike the case with other brothers, he avoided hurting me.

On this score, polygamy was a damnable cult. It was capable of creating family civil wars among the children once the fire of discord was ignited by the instrument of blind jealousy. But was polygamy wholly at fault? Did Abel and Cain not belong to the same parents? If we believed in that story of Eden, were those two brothers not alone on the surface of the earth to enjoy its abundance? What could have been more atrocious than the murder of Abel by Cain? That was a cold murder. Is it not strange that the first recorded bloodshed in the Bible was executed by a brother against a brother? The cause was love. God loved Abel more because his sacrifice

was more acceptable. Abel was the younger. Cain felt that God showed favoritism to Abel, and avenged the wrong.

All the same, I must confess. The Nwodu incident in that lonely night left an indelible mark on my memory. It changed my boyhood life into a dreary affair. It made me think of my father at the slightest provocation. I developed a complex of inner fear – a phobia for what I knew not. The palace no longer appealed to me. I lost all the nostalgia for its beauties and charms because cruelty had supplanted them. The picture of Nwodu's corpse on my mother's laps and the tears running on it haunted my mind, and even mother's house held no attraction for me any more. Sometimes I wished to die and go to my father and beg him to return. That was a childish illusion, but I was under the spell of that illusion throughout my boyhood.

As for child marriage, I now consider it a past affair – something that will never return to my country. It was degrading in all its aspects because it brings to its victims the tragedy of marital abnormalities. I was not happy with it. My "wives" were not happy with it. My mother did not have peace with it. Children born under it were always innocent victims of inferiority complex, leading a life of redeemed bastards, acceptable to their "father" under customary obligation without deep-seated love that ushers from the blood of man.

I am not an iconoclast. I love the past and its glory and tranquillity. Perhaps the things the ancients did were the best at their time. Perhaps child marriage was an excellent method of demonstration of assurance. It might have brought untold pleasure to the parents who were eager to enjoy illegitimate grand children. It might have satisfied the social standards of the time. What I am saying now is that it is out-dated and ought to be stamped out of Africa or anywhere else in the world. It is no longer practiced widely in my country. I hope that its inevitable decline will lead to its ultimate death. I cherished with respect and gratitude the thoughtfulness of my dear parents in having given me what they thought was the best gift the custom sanctioned in their culture. I hope that those "wives" whose pride I hurt, whose vanity I injured by kicking them out unceremoniously and asking them with flame of disgust to return to their parents, would forgive me.

Chapter Five

EARLY EDUCATION

The greatest gift to man is a good mother
The womb of a virtuous woman is paradise
The nurture by a powerful woman is a fortune
I was blessed by heaven and earth in the palms of a woman
That was my mɔther, my early educator
With tears and courage of a widow she gave me life
Under punishment and wreckage she gave me early education.

– *Nwafor Orizu.*

My infant education started in 1924 inside the *Obi* Nnewi. My brothers and I had two private tutors. They were Isaiah Okwuosa and Michael Iwuchukwu. They were both our uncles who previously were employed as Missionary Teachers before my father engaged them as our private tutors. We were under them for several months before our father died. I was then taken to the missionary kindergarten school at St. Thomas Church, Otolo in 1925. There, our headmaster was B. C. I. Onubogu (Later Reverend). It was in the middle of that year that the C. M. S. Central School at Nkwo Nnewi was first opened. Among the teachers who loved me were late Josiah Emenugo from Oraifite, Paul Okafor from Onitsha, Thomas Aduba from Onitsha and Mr. Onubogu from Ogidi – the Schoolmaster. My class teacher was Benson Nwegbe from Nimo. These teachers used to invite me every day for lunch. Their diet was so different from what I ate in my home. They ate very hot *alibo* (*enyo* foo foo) with *agbono* soup which contained little fish and no meat. They also ate beans and *akidi*. These types of food were not served in our home. *Akidi* was a tabooed type of beans in our home. I ate those

things in secret because if my mother discovered it, it would cause trouble. People generally believed that those missionary teachers were prone to eating totem animals such as snakes, rabbits, tortoise. It was therefore a most terrible thing for any son of my father to eat there. But I did eat, and enjoyed myself with those teachers because they were very kind to me. I could not help the way they petted me, and their food was different.

Thomas Aduba, one of the teachers from Onitsha became my particular friend. He was a mystic and practised chiromancy. His influence upon my boyhood life was tremendous. He loved me so much that he would not allow me to return home after school. He would detain me and then escorted me home later. My mother became apprehensive of the long hours I used to spend with this teacher but he assured her of my protection.

The mystic teacher observed my whole physiognomy and studied all the moles on my skin and the lines of my palms. He made strenuous efforts to interpret and predict my future. I remember all that he said, but I have no intention of revealing them now. Sometimes I slept in his house over night. He was a good athlete. He excelled in pole jumping, soccer and track. He had a wonderful power of expression, and would not brook dishonesty, laziness or oppression. He had such a keen sense of freedom to a point of nearly being a libertine. He was feared by all who knew him. Even the headmaster of the school dared not interfere with him. He spent most of his evenings and midnights in the burial ground – reciting and praying. He told me that he chose me because he believed that I was a boy of destiny, and wanted to help lay that foundation on solid psychic grounds. But I was too young to understand. All that attracted me to him was his tenderness and fatherly care – the way he used to carry me on his lap and fed me anything I asked of him. I was also enchanted by some of his magical exhibitions which included producing life snakes, coins, handkerchiefs and so forth. He once brought a dead man to life in Umudim Village of Nnewi, Ngonadi Onwuagba senior brother of Ben Onwuagba. Tom Aduba was in the palace one evening, when a message came to inform the Royal Family that Ngonadi Onwuagba died. There was confusion in the

palace. Every one was expressing shock and grief when Aduba called on to people to stop. He asked me to come with him and we left the palace immediately for his house at St. Thomas. He went into his room, came out with his magic spear (*Okari*) which he stuck to the ground. Immediately he did this, it started to rain just around there, then he went into the bush and got some leaves which he wrapped. Got red *Uboro* (belt) and tied round his hip and went to the burial ground, picked some sand from a grave and asked me to join him to Onwuagba's house after saying a lot of things at the grave.

As we came near *Agbo Ele* (Ele shrine forest), we heard the roaring of a leopard and then Aduba calmly said to the roaring animal, "shut up" and the noise ceased. With him I walked into Onwuagba's premises at Umuelè and some people were there tongue tied sitting around the corpse of Ngonadi. Agwadanaonye and Thomas Onwuagba were there. Tom ordered everyone out of the place. He brought out the leaves that he wrapped and the sand from the burial ground, said many incomprehensible words and then squeezed the juice out of the green leaves, placed the sand on Ngonadi's forehead, dropped the liquid from the green leaves inside the eyes and the dead man made movements. Then Tom talked and talked in a language none could understand till he up-lifted the man and put him on a chair. What happened next, I did not know. All I knew to be true was that Ngonadi who was reported dead lived some years after that.

The earliest notion of love affair I noticed was between my elder brothers and sisters and the children of Reverend Ekpunobi of Obosi. I remember that on Sundays, Janet, Violet, and Reuben would come to our palace, from St. Mary's Parsonage, Uruagu. Janet Ekpunobi was one of the most beautiful girls I have ever known. Nature painted her with mahogany hue, shining teeth, aquiline nose, silky hair, giraffe neck, deep brown romantic eyes. She was about 5ft. 3 inches with slender but extremely balanced body. Her younger sister Violet was sweet and innocent looking, pretty, and gallant-spirited. Reuben had a queer manner of biting his lower lip with his teeth. As a result part of his lip got swollen so that whenever

he released it, it bulked out like a small red apple. He was a tall, slender boy with bloody eyes and determined spirit. He was darker than his sisters and was shy.

Janet was a girl friend to my senior brother Onwura. Violet belonged to Onyenkuzi. Reuben and Uduego my sister got together. Poor Nwafor! I had none. And I did not understand. But I was made an accomplice to the love drama. On Sundays, when Janet, Reuben and Violet visited the palace, Onwura and Uduego would stay behind and send Onyenkuzi and me to our father to report that we wanted something to entertain Rev. Ekpunobi's children. Father would order one of the servants to get a leg or two of a pig or ram or goat and plenty of rice. Other ingredients would be supplied by the mothers. We would run all errands connected with this drama. It was all childish affair.

In 1926, my senior brother sent me to Onitsha to continue my elementary education.

I was to live with one Mr. Joseph Onwuatu of Ogbendida, Onitsha, who was an employee in the office of the Anglican Mission at Ozalla in Onitsha. His wife gave birth to his first son Emmanuel. I was to live as a house boy while attending my infant school at the old compound Onitsha. Mr. Onwuatu was a good Christian – kind, gentle, fair and fatherly. But he had a wife who was the opposite. Her name was Flora. She was a pretty lady, and from a respectable family. She did not know of my background as her husband did. She treated me just as she would any other house-boy. But before then I was never a house-boy. Mother had many servants for me. I never served anyone before. I had always been served. Being a woman, I expected Mrs. F. Onwuatu to accommodate my idiosyncrasies as my "wives" and mother did. But it was all different.

The routine work Mrs. Onwuatu planned for me ran something like this. In the morning 5. 30 a.m., fetch water for house use from Nkissi Ogbeoza Stream. Returning from the stream sweep the rooms, the kitchen and the yard. Make fire, boil water for the use of Mr. Onwuatu, now Mr. Onwuatu went to work without breakfast. We cooked breakfast for the master. My own breakfast would be

different. By this time it was 7.50 a.m., then I got ready to carry Mr. Onwuatu's breakfast to his office at Ozalla. Though an unpleasant walk, but that was my most enjoyable part of the morning, for Mr. Onwuatu usually fed me with some of his breakfast. He often asked me: "Did she give you enough breakfast?" I would say "yes", but he knew the truth, and would leave some food in the dish for me. My school used to start by 9. 00 a.m. From Mr. Onwuatu's office, I ran to school. It meant that I had to carry my school apparatus along with the breakfast dish. There was no tray. I had to carry the plate which was wrapped in a piece of cloth. Sometimes the breakfast would be steaming with heat, and the heated plate would be on my head, burning me.

The school used to close by 1.30 p.m. I would go back to the office for the plates. There was another object for my constant joy in going to Onwuatu's office in the afternoons. There was one old man Mr. Cheetam, a European bookkeeper for the missionary bookshop. He understood and spoke the Ibo language thoroughly. He was a lover of children. Every day he bought a basket-full of fried groundnuts to distribute to the boys after chatting with them. Many boys visited him daily. I was one of them. Sometimes he gave me pencils, exercise books or a bible as a gift. His kindness and patience with boys was inexhaustible. He was a true missionary. From his office I would return to Ogbendida. I never let my master or his wife know of my regular visits to Mr. Cheetam. It was a secret affair with me – perhaps an open secret.

Back to Ogbendida, Mrs. Onwuatu had an afternoon programme for me. First, I would go to meet *Nne Chike*, wife of my master's senior brother, Louis, at *Affia Ginger* or *Affia Wire* (a village market on the Onitsha – Enugu road) to carry raw food and ingredients home for dinner. Sometimes it would be a small basket of raw cassava, a small pan of filtered cassava or a small load of yams, green vegetables, palm fruits, or bottles of palm oil and other odds and ends. That was about a mile from home. Then I fetched water, helped fix the dinner, prepared water for bathing, washed plates. Emmanuel Anyanwu, the senior servant used to hew the wood, pound the foo foo and serve the dinner on the table.

Confession. I had been spoilt to meet those contingencies which an average young boy could have endured if not enjoyed. Rather I felt I was in a den of oppression. I was a very poor follower, totally unprepared to face the world of serving others as people had been serving me. I abhorred command by a woman. It appeared unthinkable to me that an "ordinary woman" should make a servant out of me, giving me orders and telling me when to eat and when to sleep and making me a cook!

One day I was unable to take it any more. Mrs. Onwuatu told me to help her in the kitchen. I simply refused. She slapped me on my cheek. I wept and attempted to slap her back. Then she got me well beaten. I wept bitterly. My eyes turned red. When Mr. Onwuatu returned, he got angry with her for beating me. He warned her previously never to beat me because my people would not like it. She was infuriated and insisted that either I leave her house or I be punished by her husband for my having the audacity to confront her. The husband bluntly refused her demand. A great fight ensued, and she was beaten for the first time by the husband, because she became most wild and rude to him. When she was beaten, she wept, and I was a most happy person in the world. The eater had been eaten. Á pusher had been pushed! Emmanuel Anyanwu and I enjoyed ourselves secretly.

From now on things became more and more difficult for me I grew thin and pale. Mr. Onwuatu was worried for my weight and health. One day, I made up my mind to run away from Ogbendida. I went to school, and from there I ran back to my father's compound in Onitsha Waterside. From there I was received by one of my father's caretakers – George Odunukwe. Albert Iwuchukwu my brother's driver and my uncle was in town with our car. I joined him back home to Nnewi.

When mother saw me, and heard my story, she wept and insisted I was not to live outside her personal care anymore, till I grew older. My senior brother disagreed with her. The next morning he told me to get ready to return to Onitsha. For fear of being flogged, I got ready to return but I told mother. My brother had directed Albert Iwuchukwu to pick me on Douglas' motorcycle back to

Onwuatu's house in Onitsha. I got at the back of the motorcycle which was about to move when my mother ran and held me back. A big fight ensued and my brother hit my mother mercilessly and gave a permanent injury on her jaw. At this time in 1926, it is important to note that there was no single male child of my father living in the palace. They had all been sacked with their mothers except Onwura who never bothered to stay in the compound purposefully. And I the only one remaining, he insisted on my going to live in Onitsha.

But my mother held me tight ready to die holding me than to see me go to Onitsha. Mother was a physically strong woman. She could actually resist my brother, if not for respect of our tradition.

As I said, throughout my father's life time, he never used physical force on my mother. It was therefore a most heart-rending affair to my mother to be so treated by my senior brother. As for me, I can never remember anything more horrible for any sensible boy to behold, than the sight where his mother was being manhandled by another man other than the father.

I did not grow bitter, but I realized at that early age that something was wrong in the palace which must be righted. There was darkness. Light must be lit. I always found it difficult to be bitter against persons, but I have recognized undesirable actions and institutions, and I have always stood against them. My brother's actions against my mother, and his similar brutality on my other junior brothers and their mothers who ran away from the compound made me to decide that as soon as I grew up, I was going to stop him from those inhuman actions. But I was very calm and looked totally unconcerned at what he did to my mother. I was never afraid of him, but I was too young to assert myself. Mother never realized that I thought that way, because my father trained me not to confide in women anything I planned to do. When she tried to advise me to recognize what was going on, I acted ignorant of what she was saying. She did not always understand my attitude. Sometimes she said I was stupid.

Because of mother's resistance, and the intervention of my uncles Orji and Ofodile who stopped my senior brother by force. I

did not go to Onitsha for schooling again at that time. My brother then told me that if I did not want to obey his orders, I had better get out of the palace. I ran into exile to the home of Chukwuanu Okeke. I have mentioned that I was supposed to be Okeke Mgbafor (Ezeugboghalu) by reincarnation. Okeke Mgbafor was a great descendant of great Ezeagha I, one of the famous *OBIS* that ever ruled in Nnewi. He was our great Royal Uncle. Okeke Mgbafor was said to have loved my father and promised to return after death to him (reincarnation), inform of a son. When I was born, prophets and soothsayers predicated that it was Okeke Mgbafor who returned to the royal palace. But Okeke Mgbafor had eight sons and several daughters. They had grown in importance in the state. By the tradition of reincarnation, those sons and daughters and children and grandchildren considered me their spiritual father, even though I was younger than some of the grand children of the man.

The Okeke family therefore looked into the affairs of my personal life with a serious concern. When therefore they heard of what my senior brother did to my mother, they were enraged. They acted. They defied my brother's action by asking me to come and live with them if my brother insisted that I must go to Onitsha. When therefore I was given the ultimatum to either go to Onitsha or quit the palace, I found a place of refuge in my spiritual home among my spiritual children.

To live there was just the opposite of living at Onwuatu's house. The whole of Okeke family and their wives and children were devoted to me as if I was a little god. They dared not call me anything but *Nnanyi* meaning our father." I lodged at the house of Chukwuanu because he was the eldest and the head of their father's compound, but the rest of the members of the family fed and cared for me all the same. .There were five boys there in whose company I enjoyed myself as I used to do at the Obi. They were Igwilo, Nwokeke, Orabuile, Edward and Ubaduba. We used to play together but none of them except Edward cared to go to school. Mother said I had to continue my school from this place. There was no problem. To go to school, I had to pass through the road which ran by the front of the palace every day. I was afraid that my brother could see me

one day and get me flogged or carried to Onitsha by force. Consequently for the whole of 1927 and 1928 when I was in this exile, I had to sneak over my father's house under many disguises like a thief. I was always anxious and afraid. My heart used to beat in rapids when I approached my father's house. But mother encouraged me. I met her daily while going home from school at a fixed place. She told me to fear no one. One of my uncles living across the road from the palace, Ezeononenyi offered his place as a secret rendezvous. It was in Iloaku, Nwokoli's mother's house. There, mother would bring me food and water to feed me before returning to Chukwuanu's house. Mgbafor Iko was then living with Iloaku and she used to give me water. My mother's food was totally unnecessary because I had enough and to spare at Chukwuanu's house. I needed nothing there. At Chukwuanu's, Mgboliada, Amanna, Mgboli Ejiakaedo, Ngwalu and Hezekiah's wife, Ukeonu, Dominic, Okoli, Simon and Onuchukwu, were all very kind to me. All I wanted, I got. But mother must meet and feed me daily, willy nilly

In 1927 I was just out from infant school to the first class in elementary school. It was called standard one. The headmaster was still Mr. B. I. C. Onubogu. Our class teacher was Mr. Samuel Okonkwo of Nimo. During the first term examination I took first position in the class of seventy four pupils. Nnodu Okongwu (late Dr. Okongwu) was in the same class and took thirty seventh position. During the second term examination I was the fourth and to my surprise Okongwu was the first. Onuzulike Emmanuel Momah was in standard six then, and was the General Monitor of the school. I asked him why I was pushed down to a fourth position. He said others did better. I was hurt and ashamed. Suddenly, the Headmaster announced that he was going to find the average marks of each pupil by combining the scores made in both the first and second terms. When this average was found, I again became first in the class. I was therefore promoted to standard two in the middle of the year. I was in the class of one Obosi teacher, William Nwankwo, for three months and took a final examination with those in two since the beginning of the year. I was fifth out of thirty six pupils. I

therefore passed my standard two, so that while I was in standard one in 1927, I was in standard three in 1928. I left Okongwu and others behind, but I never forgot the fact that Okongwu made such a sudden jumped to take a first position when I was fourth, and although we were never in the same class again but I admired him and we were friends till death stole him from me in 1947 in New York City.

In 1929, I was promoted to standard IV. The Headmaster Mr. Onubogu was transferred to Nkwerre whereas Mr. Uboma from Nkwerre took his place as the Nnewi Headmaster. John Ilechukwu of Nkpor was our class teacher. He was also very much interested in sports. I was one of those selected for coaching in the junior boys football team. I was made the Captain of the team. The principal things he impressed upon us were:

1. *Discipline in the field while playing* – to control our temper, obey the captain and the referees, and make no noise whatever except to play.
2. *Endurance* – to play evenly throughout the *period* of the game by learning the method of constant conservation of strength.
3. *The spirit of sportsmanship* – being able to give and take, accepting defeat with the same spirit you accepted victory.
4. *Fairness* – following the rules of the game and avoiding foul means to gain a victory.
5. *Constant practice* – for perfection.
6. *Respecting your opponent* – this makes for goodwill and enjoyment of each other and the game itself.

Mr. Ilechukwu, our coach had a register of character for the entire junior boys under training. Every week-end he would announce our scores in all and each of the items mentioned above. That enabled each pupil to know where he was lacking. Who scored most generally was made the captain. My greatest weakness was to keep the number one rule. If I thought something was going wrong in the field or someone not playing well and in position, I must say so. I could not keep my mouth shut to please the referee or the teacher when I felt some error was made. If a member on my side was not playing

his part well I could not remain silent. I must shout on him and demanded action. Our coach flogged me many times for this. I did not stop, he suspended me from playing. I still did not behave. Nor did I control my temper as I should. I was always sorry to offend my coach by breaking the rule. He could not suspend me too long for I excelled in other aspects of the rules of the game, and they needed me. And I was popular among my school mates. My temper did not bother them because it was shortlived. Any time I was suspended, others would demand my return. But our coach was always right to suspend or punish me.

At the end of 1929 I was promoted to Standard V. My uncle Mr. F. O. Iwuchukwu at Onitsha, discovered that I was not living with my mother in the palace. He expressed pity when he found that I had to run like a thief along the road that passed through the palace when going to school or church for fear of my senior brother. He therefore decided to take me down to Onitsha to attend Onitsha Central School. This time mother consented. Now in Onitsha Central School, our Headmaster was Mr. D. O. Osadebe who later became a priest. He was a great moralist and a lover of fresh fish. From him I learned that fresh fish was good for the brain. His humorous anecdotes kept the school in a perfect harmony.

One day we had a visitor in the school, his name was Mr. Sholanke. He was introduced as having several degrees. He was talking about the West African Students Union in England. We made donations. He spoke inspiringly to us, telling us about London and university education. After his speech the headmaster asked those of us who wanted to become educated as Sholanke to raise up their hands. I raised up my hand with others, but I also raised up my heart. The picture of Sholanke lingered in my mind for long, and I began to wonder why I could not be like him.

My life with my uncle was another factor. He was a well meaning man – generous and progressive, but he was suddenly handicapped in the way of sponsoring my education, because no sooner than I came, did he lose his job. Because of that, my mother continued to take care of my school expenses. But he had a wonderful wife Afuekwe. Apart from being attractive and wise, she had

business acumen and power for organization in the home. She came from the Aros. Above all, she was a mother of many children and yet young. She was the real boss of the house. I was the only house boy whereas there were two other girls she was training in domestic science. Three of us were responsible for all domestic duties.

I returned to Nnewi in 1931, and lived with my mother. My senior brother left me alone this time except that I used to run all errands for him. I was now in Standard VI the last class in elementary school. This year was filled with unusual activities for me. The Headmaster, Mr. Michael Uboma loved me. My extra curricula activities nearly overwhelmed me.

I was made the General Monitor (with late Felix Aralu of Nnewichi who later became inspector of police) of the entire school. This post entailed a lot of responsibility. Every morning, it was our duty to count through the class register, the number of pupils in the school and write it down on the attendance board. Other duties of the Monitors were: distribution of all registers, school diaries, chalk, ink, pens, pencils to all teachers every morning, being in custody of all school properties (the cup board keys were always with me) and we were responsible to the headmaster alone for their being correct every week.

I was made the school Timekeeper. I was therefore in custody of the official school clock. The school used to close at 1.30 p.m., if there be no extra-curricular activities, I was permitted to go home with the school clock. I woke up at 4.00 a.m. and by 6.30 a.m., I was already in the school, preparatory for the opening of the school. As soon as the classes started I had the clock in front of my own desk to enable me ring the bell at correct intervals for the change of lessons. The Headmaster depended entirely on my time-keeping to carry on in the school. Whatever time I said it was, he never disputed. There was no Big Ben to give us the Greenwich Time. My verdict was therefore the final. For the entire year, I could not afford to come late to the school once, although my house was about four miles away from which I had to trek even during the rainy seasons with no rain coat or rain boots and no umbrella. My best umbrella was a big cocoyam leaf (*Mpoto Ede*). My school bag was

made of raffia (*agwo*), which was rain proof. And although I came two hours earlier than any of the pupils, I had to go home the last because the clock may be used by the football players or for other activities after the school. And unless the last group went, I could not go home.

I was elected the Chairman of the School Government Committee. The Headmaster established this committee which actually governed the school in the sense that all matters of importance pertaining to the welfare of the students, the teacher-students relation, the teacher-parent-student relation, improvement of the school compound, voluntary raising of funds for some purposes were discussed, promoted and carried out by them on behalf of the pupils. My functions as the chairman were to communicate the Headmaster about the feelings of the Committee or the pupils on any question, to inform the Committee about the opinion of the school staff as directed to me by the Headmaster, to convene the meetings when necessary and when the Headmaster had something to put before us or vice versa. In case of disputes, I was in a position to keep the pupils from revolt, and advised the Headmaster against harsh actions. The teachers never disregarded my opinion, and the students always stood by me in almost all the matters.

For example, the Headmaster once proposed a plan for flower garden and paths to make the entire school premises look beautiful. He wanted panax stems to plant along the planned paths. The nearest place to get the panax stems was at Saint Paul's College, Awka, which was nineteen miles from Nnewi.

I told the school Committee of the headmaster's proposals. The school had no money for transportation of the panax. The only way out was for senior boys to trek thirty-eight miles and carry the stems on their heads back to Nnewi. The committee objected. They turned down the idea of using panax for the path as proposed by the Headmaster. I tried to convince them, but failed. I hated to report my failure to the Headmaster. I therefore adjourned the Committee meeting. When I convened the meeting again, I stated categorically that I was in favour of senior boys going on foot to Awka for this purpose. To get a beautifully planned school premises would be our pride. I submitted twenty names of the senior boys in the school,

including myself. And I assured them that I was not going to ride on a bicycle. We all should trek. As soon as they saw that I included my name among the trekkers, they agreed to my argument.

The Headmaster struck my name off the list, but I assured him I wanted to go with others. He offered me his bicycle. I refused. We trekked to Awka College and got the panax and the planning of the entire school took its shape for the first time.

I was the Chairman of the School Detective Committee. This organization was set up at my suggestion to the Headmaster. Its functions were to check the moral life of the pupils and teachers, to collect and return to the owners, all lost articles, to make sure that all pupils attended services on Sundays in their respective Churches, to discourage fighting and petty quarrels and to decide cases arising from such fights. Whatever case the Committee could not decide went to the Headmaster as the final court.

The chairmanship of the Detectives made me a virtual judge of the conduct and cases of the entire school. The Headmaster trusted and always upheld our decisions, for we tried to keep upright and impartial. We had punitive power. I could punish or flog any guilty pupil after a fair trial. I established rules and regulations which must be approved by the Headmaster and the staff. Cases were dealt with on every Tuesday and Thursday after school. The offenders would be notified not to go home after school.

In order to check the conduct of the pupils, I planned three sets of members of the Detectives. They were sets A, B and C. The members of the "A" set did not know of the existence of the members of the "B" set and so on. I was the person who knew the entire members, for I selected and separated them and worked with them separately for the same end. Such a set-up made it possible for the school to check morals vigorously. Some of the things against the school moral regulations were:

1. Existence of immoral act between a boy and a girl. No love letters were encouraged.
2. Bad and corrupt language was not permitted even when out of the school premises.

3. Non-attendance of the church was an offence.
4. Fighting was prohibited.
5. Disobedience to parents, teachers and seniors.

Nnodu Okongwu (Dr Okongwu), Samuel Atuokwu, Sylvester Amanambu, Patrick Agbodike, Samuel Arinzechi, Joseph Unachukwu, Xtopher Enenchukwu, Josiah Enenchukwu, David Mbonu were some of the good boys selected to this Committee. Membership of this Detective Committee excluded all girls.

At this time I was the Football Captain of the School First Eleven, and that entailed a lot of work including keeping the team in constant good shape, keeping of the jerseys securely, inflating the ball and arranging position of players everyday of the game which was Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays after school. We played against many outside teams during this period, including C.M.S. Central School of Nnobi, Oba, Nkwerre, and Ekwuluobia. In each case we won, except Nkwerre with whom we tied. My usual position was centre forward.

I was the staff paymaster. This was an extraordinary work for a student. No student ever performed that function before and after. There were seventeen teachers under our Headmaster. It was the function of the Headmaster himself to collect the fees from the teachers of each class, submit the account to the General Manager of schools whose office was located at Onitsha – fifteen miles away. Such monthly returns were made at the end of every month. Now the Headmaster left the responsibility to me in most cases. I checked each teacher's account and collected the money. When completed I rendered the account to him. Then he entrusted the entire school fees to my care. I took it to the General Manager's Office at Onitsha. (Rev. M. N. Davidson with his clerk Nelson), together with the School Registers for checking. Then I collected the total monthly salary of the teachers back to Nnewi. After checking with the Headmaster, teachers would come to his office for receiving their salaries. I had to pay each of them and they signed the vouchers.

The Headmaster's salary was ninety pounds per annum I was responsible for his domestic budget. His monthly pay was seven

pound ten shillings. His portion of it was five pounds. I reserved that for him. To his wife went two pounds for feeding. To me went ten shillings for his wine. He was a great palm wine drinker. With the ten shillings I managed to supply him with a jug (1 gallon) of palm wine daily for a month. I had to get the wine from the Nkwo market right in front of the school. Through this process, I became a good consumer of palm wine myself. If the Headmaster drank so much "why can't I?" I said to myself. Mother was more than pleased to buy me a quart of wine daily when I returned from school.

I have just mentioned my major extra-curricular activities in the school. I had other activities in my church, and among my age group in the town outside the school and the Church. Then came a day of reckoning. Towards the final term of the year, the standard six students were required to take a final religious knowledge examination. One who failed in this examination was not allowed to sit for the Nigerian Government Elementary School Leaving Certificate Examination which entitled one to enter a high school or get a job. To my surprise, I failed this religious examination. For the first time the Schoolmaster was angry with me. He showed no sympathy at all, and told me bluntly that I had to repeat my standard six in 1932. I was ashamed to find other boys ahead of me in a competitive examination, I could not forgive myself. I was too busy with other things and paid little attention to my own study. And now no one sympathised with me.

I was sure of myself. I determined to study hard and then made a special request to be allowed to take the Government Examination though I had failed in the Scripture. The Headmaster gave me a trial and I did well in our weekly quizzes. Finally, I was permitted to take my final Government Standard Six Examination.

Before this result appeared, I was anxious about my secondary school studies. My mother had always been responsible for my school expenses. Boys from my area generally attended the Dennis Memorial Grammar School, the only one secondary school in the entire Onitsha Province. In making my plan, Nwokoli Ilochonwu, one of my best boyhood friends told me about the Uzuakoli Institute. He painted a wonderful picture of this Methodist Missionary Secondary School

which was in the then Owerri Province, far away from my home. Boys were enticed by the remote. I was therefore attracted to Uzuakoli.

One of my distant cousins, Jeremiah Okeke, was a prosperous gentleman residing at Uzuakoli. I went to him. He directed me to the Principal of the Institute. I was accepted, on condition that I passed the Standard Six Examination. I did not tell my Headmaster, Uboma, about this venture. Rather, I returned quietly to Nnewi, awaiting the examination result. Ilochonwu, my friend was already a student at Uzuakoli, and I was anxious to join him!

Early in April 1932, the result of our Government Standard Six Examination appeared. I was successful. With my mother's consent, I began to plan hurriedly for Uzuakoli.

Unexpectedly, the headmaster heard that I was planning to leave Nnewi. What he did behind me, I did not know, but to my surprise, he summoned me to his house. When I arrived, I saw my mother there. Uboma told me that he was sorry to hear that I planned to leave the town without even telling him. He said that I would succeed better by becoming a teacher under him, that he had taken me as a son and that if I agreed to teach under him he would recommend me for scholarship to Awka Normal College in three years time. That would put me on an advantageous position above those my colleagues who had gone to secondary schools.

Uboma did not disguise his motive. He said that his major reason was that he needed me to help him in the school government and improvement. He felt that it was necessary for me to continue in keeping up the life of the Committees and Organizations, I had previously founded and headed in 1931 while I was in Standard Six. He played on my mother's sentiment by adding that I was too young to be thrown into the world in the hands of those who may not appreciate my background and training which he had started to give me. My mother was already his ally.

I was not happy to miss the opportunity I made at Uzuakoli. But I must admit that I was flattered by the high regard my headmaster had for me. He drafted my application for teaching. I copied and signed. He took it away from me, and in two days, Monday, June

6, 1932, at 8.30 a.m. I became a pupil teacher at Nkwo Nnewi C.M.S. Central School. The fact that I did not attend a secondary school at that age, and that I was disciplined as a missionary had a decisive role in the formation of my character. Thanks to Michael Nweke Uboma. Thanks to a responsible mother.

SECTION II

EARLY VISION, NWAFOR ORIZU MET ZIK

In this section, Nwafor was ejected from the jolly comfortable home and good care into the exacting teaching profession. As a sensitive youth, he was exposed to the indigence of missionary teaching life. There, he was compelled by the tide of inevitable social development to discover his destiny. His first meeting with Nnamdi Azikiwe so fanned ablaze his ambition, sense of mission and commitment, that neither poverty nor other human factors could quench it. A devout Christian combined with his faith in the spirit of his ancestors and their gods, he gave defeating blow to poverty by departing from Nigeria to America empty-handed.

– Editor

Chapter Six

A TEACHER

True discipline can be found only on liberty, and must necessarily be active and not passive. A child who has been reduced to silence and immobility, who does only what he is told to do, is a paralyzed, not a disciplined child.

– T. L. Smith.

I became a teacher under the Anglican Missionaries on June 6, 1932. My grade was First Year Pupil Teacher. My salary was thirteen shillings and two pence a month, or £7.18s (Seven pounds eighteen shillings) per year. This was my very first employment in life. Being in my teens, the pupils still considered me a part of them, and I enlarged my interest and activities in all the school organizations which I originated while a pupil.

The teachers had poor housing facilities. We lived in mud huts roofed with bamboo mats which often leaked under rain. The walls and floors were rough, wet in the rainy season, dusty in the hot We slept on self-made bamboo beds, hard and rough with their ridges. There were at least two teachers to each small room. In the room would be all the properties of the teacher, including all cooking utensils, foodstuff, table, clothes, and all other odds and ends.

Life inside the teachers' quarters was more like life in a boarding house or a monastery. There were rigid regulations. The school closed at 1.30 p.m., when teachers were expected to retire. At 2.45 p.m., it was time for football game which ended at 3.35 p.m. Between 3.45 and 6 p.m. was a free time during which each teacher could undertake self-study, correcting pupils' papers, or paying short visits

outside the premises. At 6 o'clock prompt, no teacher was permitted to remain outside the compound. At 7.30 p.m, it was evening prayers and staff announcements or discussions initiated by the schoolmaster. Between 8.30 p.m, till dawn every teacher must remain in his own room. At 5.00 a.m, all were awake for bathing. At 5.30 a.m, morning prayers. At 6.30 a.m., teachers' lectures conducted by the Certificated Teachers for the benefit of untrained and uncertificated teachers. At 8.00 a.m, the school opened.

No teacher was allowed to leave the premises on Saturdays without permission. All must attend Church Services on Sundays and participate in Sunday Schools. No female may visit a teacher within the premises. All junior teachers may not wear trousers and coats to school. They must wear a kind of blue garment we called *tobe*, a top snort khaki knickers. To wear good shoes would enrage the superior teachers.

The first frightening experience I had during my first weeks as a resident teacher in the school compound was that one early morning when teachers were taking their bath; I walked into the bathroom with my towel, soap and bucket. I beheld Josiah Ndubuizu Nzewi already taking his bath. He turned back suddenly and saw me coming in and he shouted "get back," before I put down my bucket, he repeated, "I said get back." I put down my bucket and ran back to my room without bath. When he came out he said to me in Igbo '*imakwo na enyegi imi, ikpo anwulu*.' Which means, If you had had the nose, you would have snuffed ground tobacco like elders". This was because he was at the time an uncertificated assistant teacher next only to the certificated teacher, and a poor pupil teacher was considered a freshman. I was very sorry I did not realize this. I apologised to him. This frightening spectacle lingered in my mind throughout my teaching career. Most teachers had no boys. They cooked their own food along with their official duties. I had a boy from the first day I started to teach.

The most baffling thing I encountered on my new employment was the requirement that I must prepare "Notes of Lessons" for my class. Imagine a boy just passed out from an elementary school. I had never taught before. I knew nothing about school method,

and yet I was asked to prepare "Notes of Lessons" in an official note book given to me by the School-master. No one taught me how to prepare the lessons. No one discussed the principles of teaching. No one mentioned "how to teach" during my studies in the elementary school. To prepare the notes of lessons was the greatest guess-work I ever did. I knew that every young teacher must have gone through the same problem of guess work.

The efficiency of each teacher was judged by three standards: first, *Ability to teach*; second, *Character*; third *Church Work*. It was the sole function of the Headmaster to write report based on these three items at the end of each year regarding each teacher. Every teacher struggled to get "A" in each of the items. "A" is excellent, "B" is good, "C" is fair, "D" is poor. The reports were generally confidential. I later learnt that my poorest mark was on "Church Work" which I always made a "B". That was the lowest grade I made throughout my teaching life. In others I made grade "A" – that is in character and ability to teach.

I have mentioned in the preceding chapter, how the schoolmaster, Uboma encouraged and trusted me while yet a pupil. That trust was deepened as I became a teacher and lived with him in the same station. He actually adopted me as his own child, both officially and domestically. Naturally I imbibed much of his ways of life, and I must confess that only very few persons have had influence upon my life as Uboma and his wife Ofunne. Uboma was a native of Nibo in Awka. He was tall, husky and of iron frame. Quite aggressive when aroused, but was a moral model for humility and honest labor. He maintained a highly disciplined life – impartial, immovable, blunt. Among the staff and the pupils he was looked upon as a reformer of lives and a spokesman for self knowledge. He eschewed superficiality, laziness, falsehood, and irresponsibility. He seldom talked. Never ostentatious and never polluted himself with the vulgar appurtenances of luxury or pride, but he could not be bluffed. He always looked inscrutable, but he seemed to know every twist and turn of peoples mind. And yet for days and weeks he could behave without a flicker of apparent interest in anyone. With all inroad into his personal affairs, with all my intimacy with him

for several years, he remained an enigma on one hand, and an inspirer on the other. I guess that people are most apt to be inspired by what they do not understand.

There was one philosophy he lived by. He often said in Igbo language "*Zobe ike gi na azu*" meaning hide your power or strength behind you. By that he meant that whenever you were dealing with another person, do not let him know that you have any power or strength, if an argument ensued, try persuasion and never use force. Should someone shout at you, be calm and sober. Never exhibit any sign of fear. People who shouted were not sure of themselves. He exemplified this way of life by the way he lived. He never talked or argued. He often acted. He seldom used force, but when used, it was lethal. That was why those who knew him actually feared him even when he acted humbly. They knew he was hiding his power behind him. He would not tremble before a whiteman as some teachers I knew in those days used to do. He was unpretentious and had no intention of unduly impressing anyone, and yet at the end of the year his school was the best recommended as "a well-drilled school" by European Government Inspectors.

His wife Ofunne was what a woman should be " amiable, kind, patient, generous, industrious, popular, and yet highly exclusive. She was a beauty born not made. Her gay smiles unnerved the cynical and her ivory-white teeth enchanted the gloomy. While the Schoolmaster was immovable, she was compromising; while he was blunt, she was elusive. The chord of their marriage orchestra was well tuned and harmonized to win friends and influence people. Their peaceful, clean life made a lasting impression upon me. It was Uboma who gave me the earliest opportunity to develop a sense of service and to learn the art of followership and leadership. To him I partly owe the moral training and restraint which enabled me preserve my teenage energy without dissipation, except through sufficient exercise and hard work to make life ennobling and worthwhile.

It will be unnecessary and futile to list all that was accomplished in the school during this period when I was under my beloved Schoolmaster. I shall however mention two things. The C.M.S. Central School had no spacious football field or play ground.

Everything was choked up in a little strip of land. After several vain attempts were made by the Schoolmaster and some church members to purchase some land from the land lords of adjacent areas, they asked me through the Headmaster to approach and get the consent of the difficult landlords. Singularly, I went to Chief Ukomadu my good friend and the landlord. He consented and invited the C.M.S. Committee Members and the land was purchased. This has been the initial stadium not only for the school but for Nnewi town generally.

The School Government Committee was still under my chairmanship. I proposed the purchase of a school brass band for the first time in our district. The idea sounded fantastic to my mates at first because it meant a lot of money which the school did not have. But it was my long cherished dream to have a brass band for Nnewi town, ever since my days at Onitsha Central School in 1930 when I was in the fifth standard of the elementary school. I was jealous of the Onitsha Central School Brass Band, and I determined that what was good for Onitsha area was also good for Nnewi area. I cherished this dream.

I found out that the pupils could not collect the .sum of £250 with which a fair beginning could be made. I asked the Schoolmaster to permit me to travel to other parts of Nigeria where Nnewi people lived and appeal for funds. It was a novel idea, but my adventure proved successful. In company of Udefuna Obi[1] one of the school boys, I travelled to several centres for the fund. We went to Aba, Port Harcourt, Onitsha and other places. A greater part of the fund was raised. We returned happily. That was the origin of a purchase of the first brass band for the entire Nnewi. Then my aim was to get something in which the interest of all Nnewi should be enlisted.

I must record my impressions of Nnewi people who lived outside of Nnewi and from whom I collected the fund for the brass band. The first thing that touched me was their admiration for my spirit for united action in the purchase of the brass band. The second thing was that under a proper leadership it was not difficult to arouse a sense of patriotism among them. Give them the idea that somebody

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1 Now Chief D. G. U. Obi, the Obi of Uruagu (Umeozuligbo).

Liberty Or Chains – Africa Must Be



As a teacher in 1935.

else was doing better than they, and you find a rebellious people in quest for action. Nnewians have a high sense of competition as a social unit. This was amply demonstrated by the way people donated money competitively. The third thing was my discovery that Nnewi people had a very high sense of order and government culturally, and this was carried *in toto* to wherever they migrated for trade or business. Usually, they must select a president of all Nnewi there, and if he proved a good leader, they would venerate him and his house as if an *Obi* at home.

Another thing I discovered was that there was quite a large number of Nnewi people trading all over Nigeria. Perhaps the exodus was partly due to the fact that comparatively, Nnewi inhabited not so fertile a land for the growth of food, and population was growing steadily. The fact that they were business-minded might also be put into consideration. What pleased me most, however, was that money was collected to purchase the band instruments. That in my opinion, was a great achievement at that stage of my life. It kindled my love for my people of Nnewi as they generally gave me words of encouragement for my initiative.

During this period, all the towns in Nnewi district depended on Nnewi C.M.S. Central School for the education of their children. Boys and girls came from Amichi, Nnobi, Ozubulu, Ukpor, Okija, Ihiala, Azia, Ihembosi, Oraifite, Ichi and so forth. Most of the indigenous Nnewi students felt themselves superior to the boys from those other towns. I had noticed this attitude for a long time, but I never subscribed to it.

I was born in a cosmopolitan home. As I have mentioned, my mother was an Ozubulu woman. My father's mother was an Ihiala woman. My grandmother on mother's side was an Okija woman. Most of my brother's mothers came from adjacent towns such as Amichi, Ukpor and Arochukwu. I could therefore see no difference between Nnewi boys and the boys from other towns. Even some Nnewi boys appeared more strange to me than those boys from other towns. I remember one Samuel Arinze from Nnobi. He was the best built youth I ever saw in Nnewi Central School. He was as handsome as he was noble and athletic. He ran like a gray-hound

during the school sports. So were the Ezeokes of Amichi or the Nnubias of Ozubulu.

More sinister than that was the discrimination among the boys from the four quarters of Nnewi. Just as you have the Boroughs of Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, and Bronx to make up the city of New York, so were there Otolo, Uruagu, Umudim and Nnewichi quarters to make up Nnewi. There was a myth that Otolo and Umudim were inseparable. They always acted as brothers exclusive of other sections. Coincidentally at this stage, Otolo and Umudim were more progressive even among the students. I belonged to Otolo which was the political capital, and most populous. I noticed that boys and girls from Umudim and Otolo tended to carry on together, discriminating against others in some ways, particularly against the Uruagus.

The climax came one day when I was invited to a private meeting being held by five senior boys from Otolo and three from Umudim quarters. They said that the object of the meeting was to bring a greater unity between all Otolo and Umudim boys in the school. Before this meeting, Mr. Christopher Ibeto was keen on introducing All-Nnewi choir practice to be held at the Central School once a week. These Otolo and Umudim senior boys contended in that private meeting that Otolo produced the best singers, and the Choirmaster, Mr. Ibeto was Otolo too. Why should not Otolo and Umudim boycott Uruagu and Nnewichi, so that on any day of competition, if Otolo choristers failed to win, it would go to Umudim? They asked: "Why teach Uruagu and Nnewichi?" To their surprise, I jumped up. I told them that either there be an All-Nnewi Choir practice, or no combined choir practice of any combined group outside of the whole. I threatened that I would tell the leaders of other quarters if they tried their plan. One of them said to the others: "I told you not to tell this thing to Christopher. He is foolish and singleminded. Well, you have called him. You have seen the result." I turned to blow him with a fist, but was held by two of them. That meeting flopped.

I determined henceforth to use my position as a teacher in Nnewi to fight the spirit of separation among the boys of different quarters I found that the All-Nnewi Choir was the vehicle I could use to

focus every young student's attention to our oneness. There was not however enough enthusiasm about the choir. I therefore made a suggestion to the leaders of the boys that we ought to collect a fund and purchase a shield for the competition. No action was taken. I therefore called upon my four best friends: the "Five Jolly Boys"[2] and suggested that five of us should contribute to enable us make an order of a brass or silver shield from England for the Singing Competition. Secretly we collected up to £5 which was a lot of money for boys of our age, who were still in school, except myself and I was made responsible for the ordering of the shield. "The Five Jolly Boys" collected five shillings each. My mother lent me the rest of the money while I saved privately to make up the £5 which Isaiah Okwuosa, my father's Secretary, used to order the shield from England for me. It was a wooden shield decorated with silver plate all over it. When the shield arrived, I told my friends that we were too young to offer that shield openly. We therefore mailed the shield anonymously to the Chairman of All-Nnewi Choir, specifying what the shield was for, stating also that it was donated to Nnewi by anonymous patriots. That was the first and the only shield so far presented to Nnewi youths for promotion of unity and Christian faith at that time. The last competition was won by Otolo C.M.S. Choir and that shield is at the archives of the St. Thomas Church, Otolo, Nnewi today.

It was during this period that we organised Nnewi youths everywhere for annual concert on the same night of the Singing Competition. Nnewi students who were attending schools in other towns and cities in Nigeria used to return during this season for holidays. It was a period of joy, mirth and reunion. With the cooperation of some older and experienced teachers such as Philip Onweluzo, Alphonsus Nwosu, Alphonsus Nwagbo, Edward Udeagwu, Josiah Nzewi, Simon Anadu, Daniel Ojukwu and Dominic Nwosu, we organized football matches with other towns like Oba, and Ogidi during the holidays. There was a great youth awakening.

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2 The Five Jolly Boys were: Nwokoli Ilochonwu, Orazulike Ejimbe, Onwuzuluigbo Nzewi, Frederick Ikedife and the writer.

Simultaneously with this youth awakening, came a great social movement from the upper crust. In 1933, the Nnewi Patriotic Association was formally inaugurated. The organization was formed by the big wigs of Nnewi sons abroad. It was an organization whose motto was based on Unity and Progress of the people. It was probably the first patriotic union founded by any major state in Igboland. Original membership was limited to men of advanced learning, wealth or professional status. At the initial stage, the Nnewi Teachers Union banned this organization to all the teachers except four representatives whose membership fees would be paid by the Teachers' Union.

One of the reasons why teachers prohibited their members from joining the Patriotic Association was because the entrance fee into the Association was too high for the salaries of the poor teachers. That was what the leaders of the Teachers' Union gave as their reason. But I decided to join the Patriotic Association in defiance.

The day I registered as one of the Foundation Members of the Association, I was told that I was the youngest member of that organization, and the Chairman and the General Secretary made special comment on my courage to defy the Teachers' Union and paid my way into the Association. I was warned by some friends that I would be severely penalized by the Teachers' Union. But I heeded not.

I was summoned by the Teachers' Union for impeachment. They demanded that I must withdraw my name from the Association if I wanted to remain in the Teacher's Union. One of them caricatured me by saying that I was rather stupid to have paid 10/6d (ten shillings six pence) admission fee to the Patriotic Association whereas my salary was 13/2d (thirteen shillings two pence) per month! This kind of statement enraged me. I told that senior teacher whose salary was then £7.10.0d (seven pounds ten shillings) per month, that I did not join the teaching job in order to enjoy a status of a blind citizen. If teaching job would cost me my conscience and patriotism, I would quit. I also made it clear that I was prepared to resign my membership in the Teachers' Union than withdraw from the Nnewi Patriotic Association. I persuaded other junior teachers to join the N.P.A.

I mentioned this incident which may sound ordinary, but I want to use it to explain the fundamental social change that was taking place in my country at that period. The Nnewi Teachers' Union comprised of all Protestant teachers not necessarily teaching at Nnewi but who were natives of Nnewi. The Union met only during the school holidays when its members returned from their different stations. The leaders of the Union were mainly those old men and early Christian coverts with orthodox ideas about society. They believed in Christian obedience even to the rule of the whiteman. They hated sudden progressive ideas and changes. They claimed prerogative over any new organization formed on state-wide basis. Their attempt was to thwart the initial efforts of certain progressive Nnewians who were not teachers. They believed that any Christian who was not a teacher was not fit to direct the lives of the people. The old idea that to be employed in governmental or mercantile jobs was a sin still haunted them. To them there was something the wrong with those people who did not become headmasters of schools or pastors of churches.

When therefore a non-religious organization suddenly sprang up, they resisted, and attempted to control the young elements under them. The Nnewi Patriotic Association had a progressive program based on the progress of Nnewi through social action. It was non-sectional, non-religious, non-political and drew its membership from all citizens without regard to position in life or sex. With its inauguration came a new dawn of history in Nnewi town. Scholarships were offered to brilliant students to secondary schools, certain amenities were introduced into the town such as post office and planned markets. Communal interest was aroused and people began to take greater interest in their own government. That was a clear departure from the past. The names of Chief Hon. Senator Z. C. Obi, Chief J. C. Ulasi, Philip Anazodo, D. D. Onyemelukwe, Gabriel Nwogwugwu, Sir L. P. Ojukwu, H. O. Nwosu will be remembered among the dominating spirits of this new movement. But Z. C. Obi was the architect.

The report of my disobedience was brought to my Headmaster Mr. Uboma, who himself was not an Nnewi man. My relationship

with Teachers' Union of my town had nothing to do with my teaching status. I therefore continued my teaching at Nnewi till 1934.

1934 was a year to remember. I joined in a revolution against my beloved Headmaster. I was caught unawares in a web of intrigue and there arose what I thought was a conflict of loyalties between my love for Nnewi and my faith in my teacher. Beyond and outside my ken, certain persons engineered the transfer of Mr. Uboma, the Headmaster from Nnewi to Kwale. Their aim was to replace Mr. Uboma with another Headmaster of their own choosing. I knew nothing about it. But Mr. Uboma discovered the intrigue, and yet could not stop it. Rather he was able to thwart his adversaries' plan by recommending a headmaster of his own choice to take his place. Since the establishment of the Central School at Nkwo, only second-class certificated headmasters were sent there including Mr. Uboma himself. But he recommended a third-class headmaster to take his place.

Nnewi people thought that that was an affront and a spite. When there were many second-class headmasters in the Mission, why a third class? Besides, compared with our former headmasters: the able Onubogu and energetic Uboma, the people rightly or wrongly thought that the new headmaster was really inferior in personal ability, let alone educational standard.

My personal opinion was to retain Mr. Uboma, but if he must go, I felt it was wrong for him to impose a person whom the people did not want upon them. It was here that I joined a "revolution", an underground movement to stop a third-class headmaster from taking over from Mr Uboma.

Certain eminent Nnewi Personages were involved including all the four teachers of Nnewi origin teaching under Mr. Uboma. Those Nnewi teachers called me into the movement. We caused a great consternation in the town. The C.M.S. Bishop came from Onitsha to the School. We caused over five thousand people to rush in a wild furor to the school compound where the Bishop was staying. They threatened to break-up everything if the Bishop refused their request to send a better headmaster to Nnewi. As the town was in uproar, I stood condemned in my spirit for opposing a man I held

so dear, but was reinforced with the feeling that Nnewi must have the best.

The "revolution" failed. The Bishop was firm. Mr. Ikpeze[3] whom Mr. Uboma recommended must be the headmaster and not until he was proved incompetent would he be removed. Now my master who promised me that in three years I would go to the Awka College was leaving me without fulfilling the promise. His transfer to Kwale was sudden. I could not go with him. As soon as he left for Kwale, I was transferred from Nnewi to Ubulukwu – across the River Niger. I do not know who planned my transfer to Ubulukwu.

At Ubulukwu in 1935, under the Headmaster Mr. L. M. Uzodike,[4] I continued some of my extra curricula activities. I planted flower gardens. With my bicycle I rode back to Nnewi about thirty-five miles to get the panax stems, which I planted in my new school. I found that life here was in a way different from Nnewi school environment. I introduced band-playing and became their band-master. It is anybody's guess what kind of bandmaster I would be. But it was sufficient unto the day. Since the people were unable to buy brass instruments at that time, I borrowed Nnewi brass instrument for occasional use in Ubulukwu school. We had band practice thrice a week after school. Ubulukwu was under Ogwashiukwu District politically. There were other important towns such as Iseleukwu, Asaba, Onitsha Ugbo, Ibuzo, Igbodo, Idumuje Ugboko, Onitsha Olona, Akwukwu, Okpanam, and others under Ogwashi. Our band was selected by the British Official to lead the procession at Ogwashiukwu and to lead in singing the British National Anthem during the celebration of the king's Jubilee that year. Over five thousand people gathered from the entire District. I was so proud to find myself at the command of the leading band by playing the cornet for the British Empire National Anthem "God Save Our Gracious King."

Ubulukwu School also won most of the prizes in the sports competition among the leading schools at Ogwashi that day. All these

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3 Mr. G. Ikpeze is now a Reverend.
4 Later to become Bishop Uzodike.

made the inhabitants of Ubulukwu proud and jubilant. We came home with our band, rejoicing and singing and praising, under showers of rain. We also came back to Ubulukwu with the District shield which we won. It was already night. But the ruler of Ubulu, Obi Ofulue I, summoned us to his palace. There we played band for him, and he blessed us.

In the meantime, I decided to become a private student for Cambridge School Certificate as a compensation for my not having attended a secondary school, and not being able to go to Awka College in the exact time Mr. Uboma promised me. Our headmaster, Mr. Lucius Madubuko Uzodike was an intellectual, a diplomat, a good Christian, a gifted teacher, and an exemplary family man. I appealed to him for help. I had ordered and obtained the Cambridge School Certificate Syllabus, and there were subjects like Latin, Literature, English History, and Mathematics which were not taught in elementary schools and which I decided to learn through self-study in my spare time while teaching. Mr. Uzodike was a student of English History. With his many responsibilities, he agreed to help me with my English History which was one of the subjects I had selected to study for School Certificate. There were two assistant headmasters who were graduates of Awka College – S. A. Anadu and Gabriel Ejekam. The former agreed to help me with Mathematics and the latter with Geography. I still had no one to help me with other subjects.

Ubulukwu was an interior town. It was situated about twenty miles from Onitsha and one must cross the River Niger from Asaba, which was about nineteen miles from Ubulukwu. There was no bridge across the River Niger as it is today. The nearest secondary schools were all located at Onitsha. Only there could I find some secondary school teachers to help me under a private-tutor scheme. I went to Onitsha during one week-end. There, I consulted Mbonu Ojike who was then a tutor at the Dennis Memorial Grammar School. He agreed to be my tutor. He took me in English Literature and Latin. I paid him monthly. The arrangement was that I had to travel from Ubulu to Onitsha every Friday after the closing of the school. We studied on Friday nights and I took my assignments and returned to Ubulukwu

on Saturdays in order to prepare my notes of lessons for my classes and prepare Sunday School Lessons, and for Sunday Services. During the week, Monday to Thursday, apart from teaching job, and regular teachers' lectures preparatory for Awka College Annual Examination, which was compulsory, I arranged my time to suit Messrs Uzodike, Anadu and Ejekam, who helped me with my History, Algebra and Geography. But my own experience was that no matter how many private tutors you had under the circumstance I had described, what you would know depended entirely on you. Such tutors could do very little even to discover what you had learned from what you had not learned. This type of study called for honest effort without which, one could deceive oneself for long. Self-study is energizing, but it is viciously cumbersome, and it requires a flame of ambition not easily put out.

Our football team, made up of the staff and the senior students, was strong, we planned to play against the Umunede team, and a special plan for practice was made for preparation against the game. One Thursday, we were out on a final practice. The game was to be played on the following Tuesday at Umunede. The best five forwards were placed against the best backs and the goalie. I was the centre forward. The centre half-back in opposition was Ephraim Umeike and one of the backs was Stephen Mordi. Ephraim was a heavy-set, tall young man. Stephen was about the best athlete in the school. As Emma Anadu, right outside crossed the ball to the centre for me to fire into the goal, Stephen and Ephraim flew to the spot. What I remembered was that I took up my right leg to kick the ball when Ephraim descended upon my leg from high. I fell down on my buttocks and not feeling hurt, I attempted to hasten up. All of a sudden my right leg shook and could not support my weight. I felt a sensation that the bone of my leg was severed inside the flesh. It was a closed fracture of my right leg. For the first five minutes, there was no serious pain.

As I fell on the ground, the fellow players rushed to me. The game stopped. Spectators were startled and each made his way toward the scene. There was no ambulance. No hospital. I was carried on the heads of the fellow teachers who excluded everyone else from

handling me. I was carried into my room. As I was on top of their heads between the field and the house, I was smiling and talked freely in order to cheer up others.

There was a small Native Administration Dispensary there. Mr. Francis E. Njokanma was the dispenser. He was called for help. This accident occurred in October 1935. From that moment I was carried into that little room in the teachers' quarters during that Thursday evening I did not leave my bed for three months. I lay on my back and stayed in that position for two and a half months. All natures calls were answered right from the bed. I ate on the bed. I read on the bed. The right leg which was broken was bandaged and hung up there, immobile. The only things I could move were my hands, neck and trunk, but from one sport and in one position. The treatment of the N. A. (native administration) dispensary finally proved inadequate. My leg was getting worse.

Then came the Christmas holidays for schools. The school closed. The teachers left the station. I could not walk, and I refused to be carried home to my mother deformed. Nor did I approve of my being taken to the Onitsha Hospital where the news could get to my home. I preferred to be taken to the Benin City Hospital, but my salary was too small to handle such journey and hospital expenses at Benin, without financial help from my home. My employer the Anglican Church Mission had no plan for health welfare of the employees. Since I maintained secrecy about it, I had to bear the brunt of it.

To deceive my mother, a message was sent to her that I had gone for holidays to Benin where I would celebrate my Christmas. She must have felt or even known that the message was untrue because since I was born, I had never spent my Christmas outside the home. She knew no one in Benin whose interest could hold me that much. But I could not help it. Let her make the best of the message sent to her.

Finally, amputation was suggested; I was to be taken to the Iyienu Hospital for that. The Headmaster's wife and her family were left behind with me in the station. The Headmaster himself went to Nnewi to tell my senior brother about the seriousness of the matter

and seek his opinion. I began to contemplate on how I would bear seeing my right leg cut off. I grew afraid and my skin began to turn pale. My appetite sunk. The whole place began to smell death to me. My dreams were blurred and beclouded. At this stage David Atuegwu, Benson Okoli, Francis Iwuchukwu and Ernest Okoli came from Onitsha to see me. They assured me that mother did not know. They appeared to agree on my being taken to the Iyienu Hospital. At the time of their visit the Headmaster was still away to Nnewi, and nothing could be done till he returned. They went back home.

Two days passed, about 9 O'clock in the morning, the sun was beaming from the east. Voices of birds were heard singing to the tune of the harmattan season. Leaves of trees were falling one by one as if designed. New buds were forming themselves into blossoming flowers. The Pride of Barbados and Burginvillia in our school garden were glittering in their beautiful colors. I was lying quietly inside the room and the kind sun was piercing through the door opening, a shrilling voice was heard from a top a nearby hill descending toward the school. It was the voice of a woman – a prophetess – Nwokorkor, out of the blue sky. She came singing and dancing in a melancholy mood, approaching the school compound from the hill. She was a tall woman with a strong physique; she had a strong resonant voice with rough long hair and chalk marks under her eyes and on her arms and wrists. She had a long staff with bangles which jangled every time she struck the ground with it. She had rope anklets on both legs and her presence was awe inspiring. As she entered the compound, she cried: "where is my son? Where is the son of spirits (Nwa ndi muo)? I was sent from Idumu Osume by the spirits to come and look for their son and stop people from cutting his leg. God has sent me to cure him."

She condemned the European medical treatment and told the dispenser never to touch me again. She removed the bandage and started her own treatment. I was too sick to follow what she did, for if I were not at a dangerous point, perhaps I would not have permitted her to touch me. Her method was crude and dirty. She removed the bandages and splints to expose raw red open flesh. She used water from special leaves which she said were given to

her by the spirits to rub the leg and manipulate the broken edges of the bones. She applied some medicine on the sore and used evenly cut bamboo splints and tied the leg with a piece of cloth. She predicted that within four days I could get up from the bed.

It happened. Four days after her first treatment, I was able to trot on one leg with the help of a walking stick. After ten days I began to touch the tip of my right toe slightly on the ground as I trotted. From thence, I was healed by Nwokorkor.

The accident prevented me from continuing my private studies. I could not travel to Ojike and others for my lessons. I forgot all about books and examinations. My comforters were some Ubulukwu boys and girls such as Nweke Dibia, Michael Mordi, Nkwor Chiejina, Priscilla Ofulue, Victoria Ofulue, Isabella Mordi. They were most generous with their time and service. They bought plenty of fresh eggs, sweet palm wine, wild meat, nourishing fruits. I felt at home. Obi Ofulue – the ruler of the state visited me at least thrice a week.

I was living with a boy Clement Obi, who was my distant cousin. He was the most faithful friend I had. He was such a fine boy – smooth, agreeable, dutiful and conscientious. Without him my tribulation would have been at large. So was the yellow-complexioned, sympathetically disposed Mrs. Uzodike. In her husband's absence, she acted as a mother and a friend. She would prepare delicious dishes and serve them with smiles which illumined my sick room. The nightingale of the church – Mrs. Ofoma, the wife of the Catechist in charge of our station was another comforter. She was a typical young African lady who ought to have an apartment in Hollywood Boulevard or Beverly Hills in Los Angeles, California. She was indeed beautiful, liberal, very modern. Like her husband she was unorthodox and yet deeply religious. She used to prepare and serve me her own dishes and comforted me.

The Christmas had gone. It was new year 1936. The Headmaster was transferred from Ubulukwu to Ekwuluobia. He came to the station to pack his properties to his new station. Then he told me that I was transferred to Ihiala. I joined him in his lorry to Nnewi. I met mother half-dead. I had never seen her so thin. Her eyes were deep. She had some sack-cloth on, looked rough and haggard. She

told me that she knew I was suffering, and the fact that no one told her the truth intensified her fear. She thought I was dead and no one wanted to tell her. I was moved with pity. I told her that I was only trying to save her the trouble of worrying about me. I did not expect my action to produce the wrecking result on her health and spirit. She swore I shall never go across the River Niger to teach. For if it were not for the River she could have stolen away and come to me. I personally wanted to return to Ubulukwu the next year before I heard of my transfer to Ihiala.

Ihiala school was small. The highest class was Standard Four elementary. Our Headmaster, Frank Ifediora was not a certificated teacher. I was next to him in rank. I was still what they called Third Year Pupil Teacher. That rank meant nothing except that it was devised to block the strides of progress of the young men who wanted rapid educational facilities through teaching job. Educationally there was nothing different between an Assistant Teacher (Uncertificated) ready to go to the Teachers' Training College, Awka, and the so called Third Year Pupil Teacher.

To transfer me to Ihiala was to pour cold water on my ambition. Not only that the school was low in grade, and therefore had no trained teachers who could help me in my private studies, but that it was isolated from any centre of learning. It was about thirty five miles from Onitsha where secondary schools were located. Transport in Nigeria then made this thirty five miles to look like three hundred miles to a poor teacher without money for lorry transport. The only consolation I had was that Ihiala was the home of my ancestors. Ukonwa, my grandmother on father's side was the daughter of Igwegbe I, the late Eze (Oluoha) of Ihiala. The school premises was adjacent to this royal family. Ihiala people were famous for their generosity to their grand children. They practically took over my feeding and petty expenses. I needed not buy any food stuffs which they rained upon me beyond my need. My salary was nineteen shillings two pence a month. I used it to purchase books, pay tutorial fees to my private tutors, and pay school fees for some of my junior brothers and a sister. To impress my mother that I was appreciative of her kindness to me, I used to save a little bit of money and gave

her as a present. She used to dance around with the few shillings in her hand telling people that her son was able to send her money. Parents are human. Even when they did not need actual help from a child, they still expect an assurance of appreciation and care; they needed to know that a child was growing into a man to protect them in the future.

How did I continue my private studies for the Cambridge Certificate Examination which the football accident stopped at Ubulukwu? I arranged to purchase new books and to re-arrange with my former tutors who resided at Onitsha. I could not go to Onitsha except during the week-ends after the school hours. Now I had more tutors. One was teaching at Nnewi C.M.S. Central School. His name was Christopher N. Obioha. The following was my time table,

Fridays	Time	Subject	Place	Tutor	
	4.30 p.m.	Geometry	Nnewi	C. N. Obioha	Monthly Fees
	9-11 p.m.	Latin	Onitsha (D.M.G.S.)	Mbonu Ojike	
	11a.m.–12.30	English Literature	"	Mbonu Ojike	
Saturdays	7–9 a.m.	Algebra	Onitsha (D.M.G.S.)	S. A. Anadu	No Fees
	9–10 a.m	Geometry	"	S. A. Anadu	
	10–12 noon	Geography	"	C. Onwuegbuzie or S. A. Anadu	

We used to close school at 1.30 p.m. on Friday at Ihiala. By 2.30 p.m., I got on my bicycle with my half-healed leg to Nnewi, sixteen miles away. At 5.30 p.m., I left Nnewi for Onitsha which was farther away by another sixteen miles. By now I had covered thirty two miles one way. I ended with Ojike by 12.30 a.m. the next morning. At dawn, classes began again until 12 p.m I had to rush back to

Ihiala to prepare my teaching lessons and got ready for any part I had to play during the church services. The church and the school were, on the same spot. The road between Onitsha and Ihiala was not macadamized. It was a rough and treacherous road which made the trip uninviting. I had to go under rain and sun. I had neither rain coat nor rain boot, and our rains were torrential most of the times. It was difficult to study for overseas examination under private tutors for those who lived right across the street from their tutors, but to hold a job, and learn by your self, at spare time, and at the same time have to ride on a bicycle with half wounded leg over bumpy roads covering sixty four miles every week-end, studying deep into the early mornings with various tutors who did not live in the same premises or even in the same town, all the year round, was a real burden, but I enjoyed it. By being constantly busy like that I was able to find a release for the restlessness which my not having been to a secondary school imposed upon me.

While engaged in my adventures at Ihiala, an information reached me that a teacher could be trained at the Awka Normal College if he could pay his own way through the College instead of waiting too long for a scholarship. During the first term holidays, I went to Aba to see my cousin Chief J. C. Ulasi on this matter. I asked him to pay my fees at Awka Normal College. I could discern through his behavior towards me that what he could not do for me was only the things he could do for no one else in the family including his own child. He was by nature generous, and his aptitude for leadership made it easy for him to discover from the young ones the suggestiveness of their possibilities.

Chief Ulasi wanted to know how much was required at the Normal College. I told him that it was not more than £90 for three years. He welcomed my idea of further education, but struck a note which set my mind ablaze in the midst of fog that beclouded my path in my struggle for education. I quote Chief Ulasi: "Yes, I am pleased with your effort to get education. I have always had my eyes on you as a promising young man who must be trained. I never liked the idea of your being a teacher, and I do not know why you did not go to a secondary school after passing Standard Six. Our

father (meaning my father) wherever he is now, cannot forgive me, if I do not pick one of his sons and give him training. I have been looking for you to be ready for advanced training. And, my God, here you are, begging me to help you! It means you don't know who I am. You don't know that I am your own blood, and that anything I can do to up-keep the palace through the sons of our father, I shall stand first to give support. The thing that pained me most is that you got into this teaching business. I never liked that. And now you want to go to Awka Training College. When you finish your training there, you are coming out to remain a poor, helpless teacher, with very poor salary. In that profession, you will never be able to be useful to our people in the manner we expect you to be in the future. I am quite prepared to help you. As a matter of fact, I am prepared to take up your training without asking for any help from any other member of the family – and, I mean how many of us are aware of the need to educate a youngman like you? I don't want to deal with that just now – not just now. All I can say is that although you have asked me to send you to Awka Normal College, but I cannot spend my money to send you to Awka Normal College where you will go and come out, still without a good prospect in life. If you can gain entrance to King's College, Lagos or even the C.M.S. Grammar School, Onitsha, I shall be happy to pay for all your education and of course, if you do well, you will go overseas for law."

I was dumb-founded. What I said in appreciation of what I heard from Chief Ulasi, I cannot now recollect, but I thanked him immensely. It was then that I told him of my adventures with private studies and how I used to travel to Onitsha weekly. I told him of the fees I used to pay to my tutors: Ojike and Obioha. He wanted to know how I managed my small salary in paying for so many items. I explained that I had to do it. He advised me against riding bicycles for such distance from Ihiala to Onitsha. He authorized me to join any of his transport lorries that ran between Aba and Onitsha daily. Ihiala is situated between Aba and Onitsha on the mile 32 from Onitsha. He informed all his lorry drivers to give me a free ride from Ihiala to Onitsha and back any time I so desired.

Unfortunately, this particular offer was not utilized because those Aba-Onitsha transport lorries passed through Ihiala during the school hours so I could not travel in them.

I continued my private studies at Ihiala, but Chief J. C. Ulasi advised me to take an Entrance Examination to the King's College in that year 1936, preparatory for admission there in 1937. Instead of sitting for the entrance at Onitsha centre, he sent me to Lagos to take the examination in the premises of the college itself. Mr. L. P. Ojukwu was my host while in Lagos, he drove me in his car to the King's College and back for the examination. Later he drove me around Lagos Secretariat, the Race Course, Tinubu Square, Zik's Press at Market Street, the Bar Beach, the Governor's House, the Queen's College and so forth. After the examination, I joined a passenger lorry back to Ihiala, confident.

While in Ihiala, I took my Cambridge Examination at Onitsha Centre. Candidates were required to appear at the Onitsha C.M.S. Central School Building for the Examination. I was anxiously awaiting my result. The year 1936 ended. I was transferred, at my request to Onitsha Central School.

My last year as a teacher in the Onitsha Central School was memorable – full of decisive events in my life. The Schoolmaster was Mr. B. I. C. Onubogu. There was one incident which amused me at the opening of the school. During the first day, all teachers turned up promptly at the school building at Odakpu. All the pupils were gathered in one building. The teachers were all there. Everybody was strange to everybody else, both the teachers and the pupils. Teachers were not yet assigned to particular classes. The school was not yet opened formally for the year. We were waiting for the School-master to arrive. There were over nine hundred pupils packed in a single building each sitting tight to the other as if they had gathered in a campaign rally ready to listen to a politician to bang. Pupils of Onitsha Central School, being a cosmopolitan area, were more free in their actions than those of Ubulukwu and Ihiala. They were not inhibited. There were among them many fully grown boys and girls who appeared rather mature in some ways. They appeared restless in their seats and did not seem to be worried what the new

teachers thought of them. Rather they looked as if they were assessing each teacher with a questioning gesture of: "Are you really fit to cope with us here."

Shortly afterwards, the Schoolmaster arrived. He went straight to the table on the platform and rang the hand bell which was on the table. The noise subsided, but not completely. I was sitting near the platform along with other teachers. The schoolmaster ordered that one of us should go down to the extreme end of the room to stop the pupils' noise. I got up quickly and started to walk down. As soon as I moved first and second steps, there was one loud noise from the crowd which exclaimed: *Olu gi-o-o*!, another voice still louder echoed the same thing *Olu gi-o-o*! Another voice, then another, and the whole house burst into clapping of hands and shouted *Olu gi-o-o*! All the eyes in the school room turned to me until I walked from the platform to the bottom end of the room. The Schoolmaster tried to stop them but they did not heed until I stopped at one place. Nothing would have embarrassed a new teacher more than this kind of ovation. I later learned, because I tried to find out, that the reason for ovation was not to be disclosed to me. Onitsha pupils were funny, and it was over six months before I succeeded to get a pupil Felix Menkiti to explain to me that "Olu gi-o-o!" as used then was a mere expression of general admiration by the pupils. They liked me, and my style of walking, and they wanted me to know by a warm welcome. And I must say that it had been my fortune to be loved by the school children throughout my teaching career. I was harsh and exacting. I used to give even corporal punishment when it was prohibited. I did not believe in sparing the rod, and yet in the inexplicable human way, my pupils, and I wherever I went, had always moved in sweetest atmosphere of personal friendship. It was only this aspect of teaching life, this human touch between the teacher and the taught; the love I had to improve the lives of the younger ones; the delicate intimacy between the expectant children and the teacher they loved; the satisfaction that came from being trusted by your pupils; their eagerness to throw themselves at your feet without reserve while at work and at play; their honest confessions when they were in the wrong; their wonderful tenderness;

their resignation to the teacher's leadership; their capacity to mimic every good and evil they saw in a teacher – which evoked the moral responsibility of a conscientious teacher – all these, plus the ultimate planning together of a good teacher and the parents of the pupils, made me to love the job. And in all my struggles fcr the improvement of my life, I had not once ignored the great love I had for the profession of teaching as apart from my dislike for the conditions of teaching in the then Nigeria. And I could not understand why so many young teachers seemed satisfied. Apart from one young teacher from Eziowelle called Gabriel Azie[5] and one Mr. Nwaneri, I could see no other whose spirit was as revolting as mine.

My encouragement came when the Cambridge results appeared, and I was successful. Gabriel Azie was another teacher who passed Cambridge at that time. My success was a big news for Chief J. C. Ulasi.

Shortly after, I received a letter of admission into Achimota College. All these made me thank God. I was always engaged in private prayers and fasting. But there came a greater event which set my ambition soaring and my task greater.

Before this great event took place, an important incident occurred. There was one old lady of about 95 years. She was the daughter of Nwakanwa section of Ezeoguine family Nnewi married to a Sierra Leonian – Mr. Macauley. She lived near my uncle's house at the American Quarters in front of Upper New Market Road, Onitsha. Whenever I passed through her house to my uncle's house, she invited me for prayers. On one occasion, her prayers lasted for too long, and I exhibited impatience. She slapped me on the back and uttered: "I am praying for you, my son because I got message from God for you. In my vision, I was told that you have been chosen to educate and give scholarships to those who have passed Standard Six. Always trust and pray to God all your life. No human

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5 Gabriel Azie was once a medical doctor under the Nigerian Govt. Health Dept., in charge of Onitsha General Hospital, and currently, the Proprietor and Owner of St. Gabriel's Hospital with branches at Abakaliki and Eziowelle respectively.

being can stop you. Anyone who dares to destroy your plan will be destroyed". I did not understand Mrs. Macauley's proclamation. It sounded Greek to me. I was a mere pupil teacher. I had never worked under any scholarship, much more about giving to others. I forgot all about it but I did not forgot this awe-inspiring aunt. Samuel Macauley her son, was one of my familiar cousins. Some weeks after this incidence of Mrs. Macauley, another event occurred which finally ended my teaching career and set my goal to get education from the United States of America, which made me not just an African but a citizen of the world. This is the story of the next chapter.

Chapter Seven

I MET ZIK

Pack your things and go home.
– B. I. C. Onubogu.

Do not lose hope, Africa needs you!
– Nnamdi Azikiwe.

One morning in 1937 while I was teaching at the C.M.S. Central School, Onitsha, news came that one Professor Nnamdi Azikiwe, an American trained Onitsha man was scheduled to give a lecture in the Court Room that evening. The news got more exciting when it was told that a popular philosopher-poet and merchant, Dr J. M. R. Stuart-Young, an Irish, was to be the Chairman. In Nigeria of 1937, to hear that a whiteman would chairman a lecture to be given by an African was indeed an unusual story. I attended the lecture.

Azikiwe was thirty three years old then. He appeared like an immaculate eagle which was standing on a branch of a tall tree, gazing impatiently around four corners of the earth, undecided yet as to what direction to fly. He looked all academic, vigorous, attractive, restless, turbulent, agitated, full of dreams and visions. He spoke with certain amount of historical allusions, erudition and scholarship far above my understanding. He first regretted the conspicuous absence of women in the audience. I think that there was only one woman in that great crowd. So he began by saying: "Lady and gentlemen!" He yearned for the emancipation of the African womanhood and their active participation in the affairs of the society. He talked about the Songhay Empire, the Ghana Kingdom, the Ashantis, the Pharaohs of Egypt, the Emperors of

Ethiopia, the great Obas of Benin Kingdom as the African potentates for which we have reason to be proud. He jumped upon the idea of imperialism. I had never before heard any one discuss the question in such a vexed manner. He stated that imperialism was the cause of our plight. He was asked what "mental emancipation" meant. By his definition I understood that mental emancipation meant the development of the brain educationally. That aspect interested me more than anything else. Then he brought up the question of "racial superiority" as a part of the "tenets of imperialism." He talked something about anthropologists and insisted that they had disproved that any man was superior to another man merely on account of skin colour. He said that Africans were as good as the Europeans. The black skin, he maintained, was better adapted for the African continem, and that in many respects, the African had superior physical body. That was the first time I heard that the black man was as good as a white man. He said that our curly hair was better than whiteman's straight hair from the point of view of beauty and utility under African sun. Then he used one term, I loved so much; "man's inhumanity to man." He said that man should stop being a wolf to another man, and that Africans should stop calling a fellow African a stranger. He indicted the Onitsha people for their thinking that other Ibos were inferior, saying: "the Onitsha people are indeed the strangest of all strangers in Ibo-land, why then consider other Ibos as strangers?" There was a universal applause when he said this.

At the end of this lecture, Dr. Young, the Chairman said among other things, that there were three classes of persons: "First, he who knows not and knows not that he knows not, he is a fool, shun him. Second, he who knows not and knows that he knows not, he is not a fool, teach him. Third, he who knows and knows that he knows, he is wise, follow him." And as he uttered the last "Follow him" he pointed his finger at Zik and the audience applauded.

I was moved by Azikiwe's appeal to patriotism. A new era dawned in my thought. I was now not only concerned with my getting education, but imbued with some hatred for racial superiority and

imperialism. I saw that love of one's own town was not enough, Azikiwe was glorifying Africa, and not just the Ibo land or Nigeria. As if by magic, my boyhood attitudes left me, and my interest in Nnewi alone departed.

I returned to the teachers' compound at the close of Azikiwe's lecture a changed man. I was more determined, more dissatisfied, more convinced of my ignorance, more enlightened about the scope of the problems of my race, more impatient with my surroundings. J. B. C. Okala knew about my dissatisfaction, and offered twice to introduce me to his cousin Nnamdi Azikiwe. He was inaccessible on both occasions.

One early morning, I decided to see him willy nilly. Zik was then living in his mother's house. A bungalow situated at Old Market Road on the spot where A.C.B. Ltd., Onitsha is now located. I was told that it was almost impossible to see Zik. Some said he was a spirit. I said to myself, I must see him today. If he is spirit, let him kill me." I arrived at the house about 6.00 a.m. Nobody was around outside. It was all dead silence. He was still in bed. Doors and windows were all locked from the inside. I knocked at the door. There was no answer. But I heard some quiet, but impatient murmuring of someone in one of the rooms, on the right side. I went around. I imagined that it was Zik's voice. I went to a window of that room and knocked. That was rude, I thought, but I meant to see him no matter what. His wife came near the window and enquired: "who is knocking?" in some-what unwelcoming tone of voice. "I am Christopher Orizu." "You don't mean Orizu of Nnewu?" She asked with a more friendly tone. "Yes, I am from Nnewi," I answered. She said nothing to me again, but I heard her speak softly to her husband, while I put my ear very close to a little opening between the window frame and the wall to eavesdrop. "He is a son of Orizu of Nnewu. You must go and see him." I think that he must have consented, for the wife thereafter opened the window half-way and asked me to go to the door which she opened. I sat down in a chair in the parlour and waited for Azikiwe. In a minute, he emerged from his bedroom bespectacled, collected, clad in a maroon men's sleeping gown, with striped pyjamas

underneath, wearing a pair of Hausa-made sandals. His hand shake was warm. In a mellifluous voice, and looking at me penetratingly, as if searching for something from behind the scene of the physical, he asked "why – anything I can do for you?"

Orizu: "Yes Sir, I listened to your lecture the other day. I want to be like you."
Zik: "Are you in Grammar School?"
Orizu: "I am a teacher at the C.M.S. Central School here, but I study secondary school subjects under Ojike and others."
Zik: "Good!" with broad smiles.
Orizu: "I want you to advise me on the kind of education I must pursue. Is it all right to go to Achimota College?"
Zik: "Do you plan to go to Achimota?"
Orizu: "I have been admitted into that school as from next February, this is my letter of admission from the principal."
Zik: "Yes, I see that you have gained your admission, but who is your financial supporter?"
Orizu: "Chief J. C. Ulasi – my cousin."
Zik: "Are you quite sure he will keep his promise?"
Orizu: "I trust him. He likes me very much. My father died, I must depend on my relatives whom he helped when he lived. And J. C. will not deceive me."
Zik: "What is the annual expenses at Achimota?"
Orizu: "It is about fifty pounds (£50)."
Zik: "Well, if your people can afford fifty pounds (£50) a year, the only difference is your transport expenses to America, then I can ask Lincoln University to accept you at the cost of only fifty pounds, (£50) too, provided you will work on the campus if need be. You get more for your money from Lincoln.
Orizu: "Whatever you say Sir."
Zik: "But you have to work on the campus for your scholarship."
I did not understand what he meant by *campus*, but I replied:
Orizu: "I love work."

Zik: "All right, if you are willing to work, then I advise you to look for transport expenses, and a few pounds for your clothing, and add it to the fifty pounds (£50) a year already guaranteed by your cousin. Let me know when you get ready."

Orizu: "I am not sure where the extra expenses will come from but I shall try my best."

Zik: "Wait a minute." Zik rose, walked into his bedroom, and in a moment, he came out with a post card picture of himself. He gave it to me and said: "Take this picture, and see me again in Lagos after seeing your people. Send me a telegram when coming to Lagos." He gave me his address.

Orizu: "Thank you Sir." I received the picture from Zik and departed.

As soon as I left his door, I looked at the post card picture. It was a vivid, youthful, self-assured, Yankee-looking picture of Azikiwe. Below the picture was inscribed: "Prof. Nnamdi Azikiwe, M.A., M.Sc, F.R.S.C. etc." Ah! those degrees, what they meant to me? God only knows. Then I turned the back of the picture. On it was written: "To my friend, Christopher Orizu[1]: Do not lose hope, Africa needs you!"

Signed: Nnamdi Azikiwe.

This was the first time Zik and I met each other, and he addressed me as "My friend". I thought of his eyes that watched me searchingly, steadfastly, and hopefully, eyes that like sun's rays, chased away all vistas of darkness in my mental horizon, and burned inexpressible meaning into my spirit. More than that, he had admonished; "Africa needs you!" It was this sentence that wrought the miracle in my life. In it will be found the explanation for my future resolutions and the boundaries of my actions. Slowly but passionately, the creative instinct, the superhuman side of the mind in me arrested

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1 My Christian baptismal name by Holy Nweje in 1930 was Christopher. This was changed in 1941 while studying at the Ohio State University when I considered the name Christopher non African.

my mental vision. "Africa needs you" – it sounded like a voice of God to me. Through Azikiwe God spoke. So I felt. So I believed. And I was exposed to some foolish ecstasies of ambition, and arrogated to myself the feeling of being called by my "Africa" to serve her. To me it was now not a matter of choice, it became a matter of destiny.

I walked home to the teachers' quarters, but my spirit had left the teaching profession. I abstained from attending prayers and teachers' conferences. I even stopped receiving my monthly salaries of 26/8d (twenty six shillings eight pence), which was the salary of an Untrained Assistant Teacher. I stayed more and more in a part of the town called American Quarters. As I said it was a home of Mr. Stephen Oranye a newly built bungalow with nobody living inside it. Only Christopher Oranye and myself stayed and slept there on wooden planks. The place was completely solitary – a fit ground for quiet studies. Christopher Oranye and his brother Herbert were attending the Dennis Memorial Grammar School. I preferred the company of secondary school boys to the association of pupil teachers in the teachers' compound. Most pupil teachers were noisy and visionless.

The Headmaster of the school, Mr. Onubogu (rightly angered at my irregularities) took a step. One morning, I was in my class, teaching. As usual, I slept at Oranye's house and not in the teachers' premises the previous night. I came to the school in time just to teach and go back again to my study room. Onubogu, a gentleman with wisdom and reserve came to my class. Like a duck, he maintained an outward calm, but inside of him was an angry "boss" with a decisive message. He beckoned me near to the class-room window and quietly handed me a small piece of paper which was ruffled inside his hand. I unruffled the piece and on it was written with pencil; "pack your things and go home". It was in the Headmaster's own hand writing.

"The hour has struck", I said to myself. Just as quietly as he handed me the "pack-and-go" order, I acted as if nothing had happened. Calmly, I picked my personal belongings – a fountain pen, a few note books, a hat and left the class. The pupils did not

realize that I was "Fired". They were busy with their Arithmetic lesson when I left. My class was Standard III. One of my most beloved pupils was Ayo Mends, son of Mrs. Elina Mends. He later became a Medical Doctor. I was not happy to leave those my beloved pupils but I had to leave. I went to the teachers' quarters to collect my few belongings for taxi to convey them to Nnewi. I felt released from the burden of this insufferable mental suffocation of the doctrinaire regime. My first act of freedom was to remove my teachers' uniform of a short and a shirt. In place of the short, I put on an African wrapper flowing with ease and comfort. Just before a taxi arrived, I saw the schoolmaster himself riding on his bicycle. From a little distance, I heard him murmur: "For goodness sake, what am I going to do with this young man?" I looked at him. He came close to me and asked: "Why are you packing your things outside the room, Christopher?" To this I replied: "You wrote me to pack and go. I am packing to go, Sir." He asked: "Where are you going?" I answered: "To Nnewi, Sir." "Good God!" Onubogu exclaimed. "I didn't mean for you to go to Nnewi. I wrote you to pack from your class to the teachers' premises. You want to put me in trouble, Christopher. I am not dismissing you as a teacher. *I know that you are honest and pure, but if I permit you to carry on like this, I may not be able to regulate others. I want you therefore, to try and comply with regulations.*"

Orizu: "Thank Sir. Since you know why I acted the way I did, I am happy. But I am deeply sorry that my attempt to help myself may mislead other teachers. I have no such intention. I now decide to stop teaching. I say so because all you said is true. I didn't keep the regulations. I cannot keep them now at the expense of my studies. I have resolved to resign. I had wanted to stay till the end of the year, but since my continued stay causes you some anxiety, I prefer to go. I hate to make trouble for you Sir,"

Onubogu: "I don't want you to resign. You should stay till the end of the year as your people had planned .... I talked to F. O. Iwuchukwu your uncle about it."

Orizu: "Can I be permitted to take a month's leave? I want to visit my relatives in other parts of Nigeria to raise fund for my further studies."

Onubogu: "You know that I have no power to grant a leave. See the General Manager of Schools for that."

Orizu: "Thank you Sir."

The discussion ended here. I left the schoolmaster and went to Bishop Bertram Lasbery in his court. I requested his special permission for a month's leave. He gave me a note to Rev. M. N. Davidson, the General Manager of Schools whom he instructed to grant me a month's leave. Having notified the schoolmaster of this permission, I made my way to Kano, Jos, Zaria, Zakirai, Nguru, Zinder (French Equatorial Africa). I was able to make some savings from my 26/8d monthly salary for this trip, a part of it was paid by my relatives to whose homes I visited.

My object for the trip was to raise four hundred pounds (£400) sterling. As already mentioned, Azikiwe told me that fifty pounds (£50) sterling per year would carry me through Lincoln University, if I was ready to work to make up for the rest. I made my own calculation this way fifty pounds (£50) per year for four years amounted to two hundred pounds (£200). My transportation and clothing would cost two hundred pounds (£200) minimum. I was counting only on bare minimum expenses which I totalled four hundred pounds (£400). Inspite of this, I knew I had to work for my summer and other expenses. I planned to raise this minimum amount of £400 (four hundred pounds) before leaving Nigeria, at least to get people to guarantee its payment after my departure. That was the object of my trip.

Every relative I visited gave me words of encouragement and assurance. None gave me any cash. Each made a promise. I was happy and confident after this trip. I at once sent a telegram to Azikiwe at Lagos that my trip was successful, and for him to expect me there.

I proceeded to Lagos. Coming to Azikiwe's Office, I discovered that to see him was a serious problem. No one in the office seemed willing to accept the responsibility of taking me to him. There was

a sort of fear psychosis all over. His own office, marked: "MANAGING DIRECTOR", was remote from the front view. I did not see it. It was a slender Yoruba girl, who at last, in a whispering manner, pointed to the direction leading to Azikiwe's office and fled. I went there and knocked at the door. His typewriter was banging inside. I knocked again, and started to open the door. Zik got up fast and met me right at the door before I stepped in.

Zik: "Who are you"Who are you" In an aggressive tone.
Orizu: "I am Christopher Orizu."
Zik: "Well, why do you want me now?" sharply.
Orizu: "You told me to see you after consulting with my relatives about my education."
Zik: "What education?" With a strange air.
Orizu: "I met you at Onitsha, you remember?"
Zik: "What did I tell you?"
Orizu: "That you will write Lincoln University if my people were willing to finance me."
Zik: "Why didn't you wait until I ask you to come to Lagos?"
Orizu: "According to your advice, I sent a telegram that I was coming."
Zik: "Well, I didn't get the telegram. I don't want trouble in this office. Go back to Onitsha until I write you."

He went away abruptly and his door banged while I was about to plead. I turned back, disappointed.

I put up a mask of smile to hide my surprise and hopelessness. This man told me at Onitsha that I could see him in Lagos soon after seeing my people. He advised me to send him a telegram when coming. He told me to make haste inorder to leave Nigeria soon. That was why I determined to quit my teaching job, and carry out that plan. And now, he ordered me to go back to Onitsha without a single consideration of what it meant to a missionary teacher to spare money for a trip to Lagos. I was miserably nervous. I was even ashamed to tell any one how I met him. I pretended that our meeting was cordial and successful. I returned to Onitsha a disappointed, little fool. I considered all my efforts wasted. Perhaps,

I had to go to Achimota anyway. All these ideas worked on my mind. I told no one. I continued with my studies, and resumed my teaching job at the Onitsha Central School, after my leave. "Has Zik disappointed me?" This was the question which I could not summon courage to think about.

A few weeks afterwards, one gay afternoon, at 3.00 p.m., I was at Mbonu Ojike's house in the Grammar School Premises. Other friends were there. A post office messenger on his bicycle rode up the hill into school ground. He held one telegram in his hand and yelled: "Christopher Orizu! Is he here?" Ojike, in his characteristic forcefulness seemed to sense something in the telegram and rushed to the messenger. It was a telegram from Zik, worded as follows:

"Congratulations, Lincoln University Scholarship Granted. Proceed Lagos for preliminary arrangements."

Signed: Azikiwe.

In company of Ojike, Okala and Anadu, I took the telegram to Chief J. C. Ulasi who was visiting Nnewi from Aba. We cancelled the plan for Achimota College thenceforth, and I went to see Zik at Lagos for the preliminary arrangements. On my arrival, Zik welcomed me in his house where I was his guest. He was so different from the belligerent animal I saw in him during my previous trip. He introduced me to Mr. A. K. Disu with whom I was supposed to go to the United States that year. This was in middle of 1937.

Disu was Azikiwe's favorite. While I was in Lagos, I stayed close to Zik. He gave me the list of essential things to purchase, such as shoes, overcoats and suits. He promised to give me his own overcoat since we were almost of the same height. Later, however, he told me that he had given the overcoat to Disu. He also gave him several pairs of his own shoes, a trunk box, athletic outfits and so forth, which he originally promised me. He gave me none. He told me that it was better to give those things to Disu, being a Yoruba, and that I ought to understand. He wanted to serve him first. Being non-tribal, I was not bothered, but I was unhappy, since I had nothing myself.

I hurried back to Nnewi and Aba to report of my visit to Lagos, and to say good bye to my people. Chief Ulasi told me to return to Lagos and join Disu to the United States. He would send my transport money and school fees to Azikiwe. Several people came and offered prayers. I met my mother who definitely refused my going abroad. But I left Onitsha for Lagos in accordance with my plan with Azikiwe.

On arriving Lagos, Zik published in the *West African Pilot* about my imminent departure to the U.S.A. with Disu. Several telegrams were sent by Azikiwe and myself to Chief Ulasi to remit the money. Time was in hand. The Shipping Company was becoming impatient of leaving a space for which no deposit was made as usual. My cousin did not respond. Other relatives remained silent and stand-offish. I was alone and desolate. Tongue-tied and disgraced, I could not look Zik in the face. Isolated under the veil of poverty, I brooded and meditated. If the fact of my departure had not become the knowledge of every one in the country, it would have been a different matter.

The morning of the departure came. Zik, A. K. Blankson, "Tom Tinkle" and myself packed into Zik's small opel car and drove to Apapa Wharf. Disu went on board the ship for the United States. As his boat departed majestically from African shores, we waved our hands in joy and hope for his luck and for the prospects of what he would do for Africa on return.

Between hope and despair, some memories of the past brought tears and sadness, followed by emotions of frustration. I tried to maintain an exterior calmness. I wore an insipid smile which I put up in order to hide the smarting tornado of the agony beneath. Azikiwe watched me shrewdly as we drove back to Lagos. He was discussing one Mr. Robertson, one of the crew whom we met on board the ship. Zik said he travelled with Mr. Robertson when he went to America, Coincidentally, Disu was again travelling with the same Robertson. As he spoke, the car was running fast back to Lagos. Though I was in company of friends, but I was absent. Disu's departure left me a deluded youngman – desperately hopeless, and yet faithful!

During this period, there was an interlude of very serious events one must be related here inorder to make my odyssey more understandable. The two tragedies that occurred at this time, were the death of my junior brother Benneth and my senior brother Nwokeji. These two tragedies struck while I was still a teacher at the Onitsha C.M.S. Central School before ever my first plan to go to America.

The tragedy of the death of Nwokeji awakened a historical awareness among Nnewians and the entire royal family. Nwokejiobi was the son of one of my father's wives – Nnanu Chukwujekwu and my immediate senior brother in the palace. It was around the end of first term of the school year in 1937. I was a teacher in Onitsha Central School. Nwokeji was living at one Stephen Olisa's premises (an Umudim Nnewi man) near Modebe Street, opposite Megafu's house. Olisa was Madam Offia Nwaku's son and Offia Nwaku was a close friend of my mother. Meanwhile after the death of our father, darkness enveloped the royal palace. All our father's male children were scattered all over the place like sheep with out a shepherd. Nwokeji's mother had long gone back to her home like almost all other wives with male children. There in Onitsha, he suddenly died. When the sad news reached me, I took permission from the headmaster and rushed to Nwokeji's to see the corpse of my brother on a mud bed without any clothes. I went out silently and single-handedly to arrange to take the corpse to Nnewi. All my close relatives in Onitsha refused to co-operate. I had to run around to solicit for help. I went to Zephniah Ojukwu of Uruagu and borrowed two pounds ten shillings from him after telling him what had happened. With this money added to my little savings, I bought coffin and cloth, chattered a lorry and got some other people to join me to take the corpse home. We set out for the home-ward journey. When our vehicle reached Oba after Idemili hill, we met Charles Ezeoke. I stopped him and broke the news to him. Both of us wept together. I returned to the vehicle and we continued our journey home. When we arrived at the palace, Mgbugo, my mother and the few other women collected money and put things in order

for the funeral. Nwokeji was lying in state at the *Enete*. After all arrangements, I sent for Nnanu and she came from Umudim.

After the funeral which lasted a few days, I got ready to go back to my station. I had not half a penny on me. My mother had spent all she had for the funeral. I went to my senior brother Josiah. He was at the *Obialachu*.[2] I asked him to refund me the £2/10s (two pounds ten shillings) I borrowed at Onitsha and promised to pay on my return. He was disinterested. I could not understand him. This whole affair from beginning to end was his sole responsibility so I did not see how I should be begging him to pay me back only just a part of the expenses I incurred in the whole arrangement. He did not contribute anything himself even in the burial. I tried to persuade him in many friendly and respectful ways but he remained unconcerned. Not that he did not have the money but that he showed no sympathy for the dead. This caused my first and only confrontation with him when I insisted that he must refund me the money before I returned to Onitsha. Peter my junior brother who was then an apprentice mechanic at Mr. Hamilton's workshop at Odakpu Onitsha, and myself did not allow him to leave the *Obialachu* to the *Obi* without refunding me the money. The entire Umu-Okafor elders were on our side. And after, they directed him to make that refund, he did. While this was going on, all the *Umu-Okafors*, the *Umu-Onyechis* and Nnewi who were outside the *Obi* premises for the ceremony wept loudly when they saw me leaving the *Obialachu* to my mother's house with the money, weeping. Peter and I went down to Onitsha.

The message of this particular chapter is that 1937 was one of the most decisive era of my life, the events of which are as follows:

1. It was in 1937 that I was transferred from Ihiala to Onitsha Central School where I ended my career as a teacher.
2. It was here that came the climax of all my efforts to get higher education inspite of the fact that I did not attend a Secondary School:
   (a) The result of the Cambridge Examination which I took in 1936 came out and I was successful.

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2 Royal Chamber – upstairs.

(b) My effort to go to D.M.G.S. Onitsha or King's College, Lagos, while a teacher, failed and Bishop Lasbery obtained me admission into Achimota College in the then Gold Coast.

(c) Mrs. Macauley prophesied to me that God had destined me to educate African boys and girls who passed standard six. This she said, was my greatest assignment from heaven. Suddenly, there occurred two tragedies: My immediate senior brother, the fourth son of my father, Nwokejiobi died, followed by the death of my immediate junior brother, Okoli. These two events shook my faith in life but drew me nearer to God.

(d) Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe made his first speech which I attended in Onitsha. My success in Cambridge Examination, my admission to Achimota College and Mrs. Macauley's prophecy emboldened me to go to Zik without any introduction where two things occurred:

(i) My going to Achimota was cancelled and he promised me Lincoln University Scholarship and Admission.

(ii) When I told him that I had no money to go to America he wrote on the back of his own post card picture as follows: "To my friend Christopher Orizu, do not lose hope, Africa needs you."

3. Following Zik's inspiration, I got one month's leave from Bishop Lasbery to seek for fund to go to America as proposed by Zik. But I did not yet stop teaching.

4. About the month of July, Zik sent a telegram to Onitsha Central School, congratulating me for obtaining Lincoln University Scholarship for myself and A. K. Disu to register with the Lincoln University in September, 1937.

5. I resigned my appointment as a teacher from the Niger Diocese hoping to travel with Disu. On the morning of our departure from Lagos, none of the funds promised to me was available. Disu left alone. I returned from Lagos soliciting for funds for American Education. I, being the first Ibo student that Zik

offered American scholarship, the news spread among Nnewians and all over Nigeria.

6. During this period, I looked like a wanderer travelling from one end of Nigeria to another where Nnewians resided appealing for financial aid.

Toward the end of August, 1937, my senior brother, J. N. Orizu (H.R.H.) sent for me, and asked me to call Chief Joseph Obiukwu Ezeoke of the Amichi ruling family. He asked Chief J. O. Ezeoke to ask me why I resigned from teaching, wanting to go to America without funds and now wandering like a homeless vagabond. Joseph Ezeoke asked me why I was going far and wide. I did not know what to answer. Then I said to Ezeoke in a very sober tone of voice, "please tell him that he who knows where he is going, is not a wanderer." Two of them kept silent for a moment and my senior brother who was very fond of me said, "I don't want you to get lost somewhere, because you want education from America. I heard that this Azikiwe man will put you young men in trouble." Then I assured him by saying, "but I know what I am doing." Joseph Ezeoke who was the first son of Princess Igboanuzuo, the first daughter of Ezeifekaibeya I, my grand father, felt very unhappy and said to my senior brother, "Do leave Nwafor alone, God will guide him" and left abruptly in a painful mood. After this I was not discouraged from going on to seek for fund to go to America. The fact that a good many of my people did not understand me, did not bother me.

7. Toward the end of November 1937, when I visited my mother in the palace, my senior brother H.R.H., J. N. Orizu again called me at the *Obialachu* and raised the issue of Obiship and conveyed to me his ideas, desires and wishes. The issues he raised made me lament with him the unhealthy circumstances surrounding the premature death of our father and lack of solid foundations for continued progress and meaningful existence of the institution. The unpleasantness of this awareness kept two of us as both brothers and friends, beyond the imagination of observers, even after his death in 1962.

My activities during my teaching life and the sequence of events early and middle of 1937 before this my meeting with my brother on Obiship toward the end of that year, makes it clear that my ambition to get education and to go to America predated this my meeting with my brother. Had I but left with Disu earlier in the year to register with Lincoln University in September, 1937, my brother would not have had the opportunity to raise this issue of Obiship toward the closing of that same year.

The first meeting with Zik, however, electrified and broadened my life but made me work through the narrow path of relentless struggle to satisfy the demands of the ancient and the modern, in my Nnewi and my Africa, and with all divine messages from Mrs. Macauley, Zik and my own Nnewians, the struggle continued with resignation, sacrifice and faith in God.

Indeed 1937 was my year of destiny, which awakened in me all spiritual forces, all mental and physical combativeness, all lessons of unlimited patience and unquenchable faith in God. Before ever I landed in America, the crucibles of life's vicissitudes had made me develop the philosophy of fearlessness which characterized all my actions from 1939 when I registered with Lincoln University to 1945 when under the chairmanship of Herbert Macauley, I presented to my country Nigeria and Africa my mission of Horizontal Education and African Irredentism.

Chapter Eight

THE SPIRIT OF ANAEDO
(Great Agbaja Clan)[1]

Ye gods and goddesses of Agbaja, ye ancestors of Anaedo, my gallant and noble founders of Nnewi, hear the prayer of your son. I need money to go to America. Help me find it. If ye fail me, I shall never see Anaedo till I die. The next I shall see this Anaedo is on the day I shall be welcomed from America. If I never go I shall deny ye my presence forever.

– Nwafor Orizu.

Now that Disu had left me, one phase of my history seemed ended. My memory wandered into my bitter journey in a short span of life. My first fear was the possibility of missing the chance at Lincoln University. Then I was afraid that Azikiwe might be disgusted with how my people treated me. He might change his mind. I was wrong. It was Azikiwe himself who cheered me up. "Failure at first attempt would not frustrate you," he said. "after all, I failed many times before I succeeded," he concluded.

I hid my feelings to the public and acted absent-mindedly, for I rather would not think of the detailed problems confronting me. I was ashamed to return to the provinces and see my family and friends to whom I had bade "goodbye." The anticlimax was

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1 Agbaja is one of the most important clans in Iboland under the mighty goddess Edo. Three major towns of Agbaja are Nnewi, Oraifite and Ichi occupying the land area called Anaedo. The inhabitants do not believe that there is any goddess any where in Nigeria as great and powerful as Edo Agbaja – the central object of their collective security and pride which makes them culturally indivisible.

unbearable. People began to give me cold shoulders. Most of them advised me to go home and leave Azikiwe alone. What a crushing blow to my ambition.

I had no money for rent and feeding in Lagos. One Alexander Onyeador, an old boy friend, newly employed by the Posts and Telegraphs Department sheltered me. He lived in one small room at Okesuna Street, where two of us and his house boy slept. I paid no rent nor contributed enough to the cost of my feeding. In short, I became my friend's dependant. I did not like it but had to endure it for a while. I must have time to recollect myself from the shock of disappointment.

I told Zik that I wanted to be assigned to a specific job in his press without pay. Wild rumor and gossip spread all over that Azikiwe was unable to pay his staff well or regularly. I did not know which. His own most immediate relatives under his employment were the purveyors of the gossip. For that reason, I decided to avoid any monetary anticipation from him. My honest feeling was that he was a struggling pioneer whom people did not yet appreciate. I found it difficult to understand the gossipers, Mr. Okwusogu, the then Works Manager assigned me to the Circulation Branch. It was a most useful experience for me.

During my spare time, I studied. I met several secondary school tutors including Mr. Nwangoro who offered to help me. It was then that I discovered that Lagos had no public library worthy of a civilized municipal government. I went to Tom Jones' library. It was an empty space with a few travelogues and quaint books. But I made the use of the spaciousness of the old edifice.

My host Alexander and I could not live together long. He had an even temperament, friendly and selfless. I led very unpredictable and elusive life which only a few persons could tolerate at a close range. Since Mr. Uboma came into my life, I was in love with his favorite song, particularly its second verse which reads as follows:

Anamacho iyi Jesu
Nekpe ekpelu mgbe ncha
So ya neje n'enu ugwu
N'ezu nna ya n'ebe afu.

Which translated from Ibo into English reads:

I want to be like Jesus
So frequently in prayer
Alone upon the mountain top
He met His father there.

God is always near when you relax and surrender in absolute privacy.

Alexander and I did not agree on the issue of visitors. I would not encourage Alexander to entertain in our room too frequently. He admired my attitude but had no intention of living that way at that time.

My demand for quietude in our Okesuna room was stern. I used to pray long hours when he and his boy were out. When praying, I used to lock the door from inside. At times they may return while I was praying, and they would not open the door. This had happened on occasions. I recognized that I had caused some inconveniences but failed to realize that my friend was offended. This was intensified by the fact that as time went on I was contributing less and less to our boarding, and it had come to a zero point now.

One Saturday evening, I was at home alone. I locked all the doors and windows, and read my Bible. Just as I knelt to pray, Alexander knocked at the door. I still had over ten minutes to go. His boy was already standing. Alexander knocked hard but I kept on praying. After about five minutes knocking, my friend lost his patience and burst into angry words. He rushed to the window and broke it into two and jumped into the room and unlocked the door. I was still kneeling down. After prayers, I got up. I knew I was wrong to lock a man out of his room, but how could I apologise for praying? So I kept silent. Alexander was a fair-minded fellow an amicable companion, and with all his youthful character, a rare friend. He apologised for his temper.

The incident awakened me. Like a prodigal son, I asked myself: "What am I doing in Lagos?" Then, I borrowed a sum of two pounds ten shillings from Azikiwe and left for Kano. I assured him that I was returning to Lagos soon or late to proceed to the United States. "Any time you come down, I shall see that Lincoln University does not withdraw the scholarship," said Azikiwe.

Now in Kano with my brother, Onyenkuzi in his two sma rooms at S6, Sabon Gari. In S6 were many tenants and the plac faced the open field in the heart of Sabon Gari. I was subdued b a sense of impotence and failure, but I never believed that as a whol I was going to be a failure in life. I believed something was goin to happen to change my ill fate. My brother and I went to som Hausa Mallams whom we hoped could predict the future. Nothin happened. There was one Mallam I cannot forget. Reason? Wheneve we went to his house for inquiries as the ancients went to the cav of Engedi, the Mallam would greet us: "*Moor-nye*", meanin "morning." He was a diminutive funny-looking fellow, as skeleta as a grasshopper but had Fulani features. He had grey, scanty beard with red-kola colour pointed teeth. His salutations, amused me a lot, but he said nothing that was useful. It was all penny-penny enquiry. Neither my brother nor I had money for any expensive exploration. All ended in smoke. I lost faith in sorcerers, but I did not lose hope in my pursuit.

I used to go away to solitary places and prayed. After severa one-to-two day fasts and concentration in praying, I planned a five-day fast. On the third day my brother discovered that I was not feeding myself. I was growing thin. I broke my fast at once because I never wanted to make a scene of it. I hated to look sanctimonious. The tension I had already created was enough. My brother himself was a nervous wreck. I did not want to add more to his burden.

On breaking the fast, I determined to visit Chief Ulasi at Aba. His reception was cold. He tended to avoid me but later he changed his attitude after some spirited discussions with him. He then agreed to contribute the balance of one-hundred and fifty pounds provided that the Kano people produced the actual cash of one-hundred pounds. He urged me to return to Kano and get the money. I proceeded to Kano again. On my return to Kano, I told M. N. Moneke and N. O. Ulasi that J. C. Ulasi said he would contribute one hundred and fifty pounds if they paid one hundred pounds in cash now. Instead of paying that cash to me, they told me that they had written a letter to J. C. Ulasi confirming their promise to pay that one hundred pounds and that I should go back to Aba, since their confirmatory

letter must have reached Chief J. C. Ulasi. I was not alone in meeting Chief Ulasi this time. I was accompanied by Mr. J. I. Anosike from Port Harcourt. Chief J. C. Ulasi gave me a written note to assure N. O. Ulasi and M. N. Moneke that he was firm and that I should proceed to Lagos from Kano.

Someone else at Aba came into my life this time. Maxwell Oguonu was an Nnewi man with a queer character. He lived in a small house surrounded with flower gardens and canary cages with birds singing day and night. He behaved like a spiritualist. He looked odd in his five feet frame. His little house was isolated. No visitors. No friends, unmarried. I used to go there for prayers. He gave me words of encouragement. Both Anosike and Oguonu persuaded me to visit my mother at Nnewi before going back to Kano again.

Oguonu and I first went to Onitsha where I discovered that Mbonu Ojike, Etuka Okala, Nnodu Okongwu, Nwankwo Chukwuemeka, George Mbadiwe, Okechukwu Ikejiani, Kingsley Mbadiwe, were ready to leave for the United States – to Lincoln University! That was a most encouraging news.

From here we proceeded to Nnewi to see my mother. It was embarrassing to see her again. I made up my mind that that journey to Nnewi was to be my last before proceeding to the United States. If I never travelled, I would never see the soil of Nnewi again. To make this resolution momentous, when I was departing from Nnewi, I stopped at the boundary between Anaedo and Ojoto, I picked some sand from Ichi soil (The Anaedo land) raised it up to the sun and prayed to the spirit of my ancestors and the founders of Anaedo and Agbaja: *Ye gods and goddesses of Agbaja, ye ancestors of Anaedo, my gallant and noble founders of Nnewi, hear the prayer of your son. I need money to go to America. Help me find it. If ye fail me I shall never see Anaedo till I die. The next I shall see this Anaedo is on the day I shall be welcomed from America. If I never go, I shall never return. And I shall deny you my presence for ever.* I wrapped the Anaedo sand properly and departed with it. If, as it seemed, I failed to go to America, then I would always look at that sand when I felt nostalgic of my fatherland. I proceeded to Onitsha

to consult Ojike and others. Then, from there to Enugu and joined the Northern Limited train.

While on train, I came across a youngman moving with an arrogant air in company of a tall, yellow lady. The exceptional beauty of this lady and the "I don't care" attitude of the youngman with her was the talk of the passengers in the train. I was standing thoughtfully apart on the open end of a coach when this confident young man passed by me and nearly pushed me down unawares because he was moving fast. I turned angrily and asked: "Who are you?" To my surprise, he smiled and said: "I am Kinsley Mbadiwe." It occurred to me that he might be the Mbadiwe whom Ojike told me in Onitsha was going to Lincoln University. On my enquiry he confirmed my guess to be true. I therefore introduced myself. That was the first time we met. Mbadiwe told me that he was travelling to Umuahia but will soon proceed to Lagos to see Azikiwe. I therefore scribbled a telegram to Zik which reads:

"Azikiwe, Lagos.
Par ardua ad augusta."
Christopher Orizu.

I arrived in Kano. Moneke and N. O. Ulasi told me to go on to Lagos and that Chief Ulasi would be their treasurer through whom all money should come to Lagos. I had very little to pack. I joined the train to Lagos.

Azikiwe again gave publicity to the event. At this time the seven Ibos had arrived in Lagos. Our pictures were published in the front page of the "West African Pilot." He gave our whole group a spectacular nomenclature *THE EIGHT ARGONAUTS* going to America to win the *GOLDEN FLEECE* back to Africa. It was a matter of national interest, for all Nigerians were alerted.

On November 28, 1938, the hour struck. My colleagues were all ready. Truly, they looked like the Ancient Argonauts – undaunted, full of flame, eager to move! I was still suspended in the air Money was not forthcoming for me. Time could not wait. The number of the Argonauts was at once reduced to seven. I was not among them. Zik expressed in the press the next morning that "owing to

unforeseen circumstances, Christopher Orizu was unable to go with the others". As in the case of Disu, I became a party to wave a "good-bye" to my colleagues, to send them out for the "Golden Fleece" for which I had started to fight much earlier than they. It was now my fate to go back again to Nigerians; to sing the song of the defeated, to carry the banner of poverty and orphanage; to pest around like a troublesome beggar, or to perish like a forsaken adventurer who could not even return to his own native town against a binding oath, with the ancients and the gods.

But have Anaedo, the ancients and the gods forsaken me? The answer is no. The story of the next chapter is a story of the miracle and mysterious way through which God made it possible for me to attain the object of my ambition. It is the miracle of Kaduna Junction – the spirit of Anaedo. The son of Anaedo cannot be an orphan. With this faith I was enarmoured to rebound into the harsh and elusive world. The miracle was wrought at the Kaduna Junction. That is the story of the next chapter.

Chapter Nine

THE MIRACLE OF KADUNA JUNCTION

Your people do not understand you, my dear youngman. Their love for you is your trouble. They don't want you to leave Nnewi. We who know your family understand why and to an average Iboman, there is nothing hidden about it. In your father's name, I vow to help you.

– Green Mbadiwe.

I left Lagos instantaneously. There was no room to stomach any further abuse of Zik's time. I joined the train to Kano – mourning. For days and nights, I brooded in Kano in ominous silence. Food had no taste for me. I was bound to believe the teachings of my experience, otherwise, what else should be left to me? For me, that was a period of temporary insanity. I was remorseful, outraged, and frantically strained. My questions were: "How dare poverty pervert my legitimate ambition? Must I surrender to the dictates of want? Am I defeated at last? Is God with me, or is my spiritual vision oblique and illusory? Must I continue to trust God or to defy Him? Are the seven students who succeeded to go to America more righteous or richer?" To those questions, I had no answer.

One day, I sent a desperate telegram to Zik, inquiring why he did not reply to a letter I wrote him on my arrival to Kano. In that telegram I asked him whether he had left me to perish. Zik replied by another telegram as follows: "Cheer up youngman, the best is yet to be!" The wordings of the telegram performed a magic to my sunken spirit. Courage came back. "So far as Zik had not given up, I must struggle on."

Another conference with N. O. Ulasi and M. N. Moneke. They said that according to our previous arrangement, they still stood behind me to pay a sum of one hundred pounds provided that Chief J. C. Ulasi paid the initial sum of one hundred and fifty pounds. They insisted, however, that it was a high time I gauged properly the feelings of Chief Ulasi. "Go to Aba" they urged "ascertain once and for all if Chief Ulasi is indeed serious and no need jolting here and there!"

That was a frank talk, less sugar-coated than ever before. It appealed to me. I joined the Kano-Port Harcourt Limited Train to Aba. I got in contact with J. I. Anosike who rushed to Aba from Port Harcourt to meet me. Two of us met Chief J. C. Ulasi. Anosike spoke in my behalf with directness: "To disappoint a youngman like this" he started, "would reflect the greatest shame on Nnewi. The shame is that of all Nnewi sons and daughters everywhere and can never be erased in history."

Result. Chief Ulasi solemnly and for the first time told me that it was not his intention to disappoint me as he did. His business was bad. Palm produce market was bad, and it affected him greatly, but no one knew how down he was. He said that his love for me and his desire to see me fulfil my ambition made it impossible for him to tell me outright that he could not help me. Each time he thought he could make it, but he failed. "Never mind," he said, "we shall help you. God will hear your prayer. I feel that you are the hope of the family of tomorrow. Don't worry your life." The discussion ended abruptly because feelings were high.

Chief Ulasi's beautiful wife (*Nne Lily*) served us with her delicious luncheon. Now Anosike decided to return to Port Harcourt. They advised me to return to Kano and keep other supporters interested, and as soon as money was available, Azikiwe would be informed to arrange for my departure. They told me to cast away all fears and doubts created by previous disappointments. The past was gone. We were now on new understanding and resolution.

The next morning, I boarded the Northern Limited Train for Kano in the third class compartment. Rumors of my plight became a national talk. People were sorry for me for having gone to Lagos

twice and failed to go to America. I listened to some passengers who discussed my plight without realizing my presence. Stories went wild that Nnewi people deliberately left me in the cold because they did not want me to leave Nnewi. Some said that my family simply did not have the money. No one seemed to know where the truth was. I did not tell. In each station where the train stopped, those who knew me gathered and gave me few words of advice. We came to Kafanchan. Among those who came to see me was one tall, yellow, glamorous lady of Onitsha origin. Emily Mba was famous for her beauty and physical strength, apart from being a daughter of a noble man. Her father was the first Ibo to become a member of the Legislative Council of Nigeria. Emily walked straight to me. With her exquisite figure and compelling gesture, she looked at me admiringly. There was a sudden change in her countenance. She turned again and asked: "Is this the fine youngman whom his people have the heart to disappoint?" Then she exclaimed: "*Nnewu unu bu alu! Nnewu unu bu alu! Nekene omalicha nwata fa nechasialu anya ebele emero fa.*"[1] As she shouted, more people gathered. I asked her to stop. She dashed away and returned with three loaves of bread and a can of corned beef which she gave to me. She bought a second class ticket from Kafanchan to Kano station and gave me saying, "you better go to the second class compartment and rest, please". I thanked her. Why she was so kind, I did not know. I had seen her at Onitsha in previous occasions, but never met her before personally.

A space was made for me in the second class coach. Having got access to seclusion, I began to read my Bible and to pray. We

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1 "Woe unto you Nnewi people! How hard a heart you have to withhold your sympathy from such an elegant youth."

came to Kaduna Junction at night. Because of the way people gathered around me in other stations, I decided to stay put in my compartment. A few minutes after our arrival, at the Kaduna Junction, a man knocked at my door and enquired for me. I remained silent. He knocked again. I did not respond. He left and soon returned with a train guard who had the key to all compartments. He opened the door to my compartment and said: "Are you Christopher Orizu?" "Yes", I answered. The enquirer was Mr. Adioye, an employee of Mr. Green Mbadiwe, a gold miner.

Mr. Adioye told me that Green wanted me. I did not understand whom he meant by Green?" With a surprise he asked "You don't know Green?" "No" I said. I told him that I did not want to come down from the train. If Green wanted me, he could come to the train. He left me, apparently annoyed. A few minutes later he returned and explained that it was Green Mbadiwe who wanted to see me for an important matter but was prohibited from coming to the railway platform by the regulations of the station. I expressed my regret but insisted I could not come down. I was really not happy to see people any more. That was all.

Shortly afterwards, Green Mbadiwe and a group of friends were permitted to come to the train to see me. He ordered for some drinks. Since I did not drink alcohol, he gave me a bottle of ginger ale. Mbadiwe told the people about my late father, what a wealthy and influential ruler he was, and he came to know him through Chief Igwegbe, his own uncle. Then he switched to the question of American Education and his hope that American civilization may save Africa from imperialism. He told them how he read the story of my disappointment when Ojike and others left Lagos.[2] He wanted to meet me and do something about it.

"Look here, Christopher Orizu, tell me how much it will cost you to study in America for four years. I am ready to give you a cheque for it. When you return you pay me, if your people be unable

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2 "Nnewi People Disappointed Him." That was the caption of the front page publication Zik made about me when Mbadiwe, Ojike and others left for America.

to do it." I bent my head in shame, because I was brought up with a great sense of family pride. That last clause got me ... "if your people be unable to do it." At the junction of the Nigerian world, where East, West, North and South met – there, before strangers, I was confronted with the kindest proposition in my life. A philanthropic voice of a patriot was offering help, and without meaning any harm, put in a phrase which I could not at that time resolve with ease: "if your people be unable to do it." Those words rang in my ears like a slap in the face. It suddenly evoked some uncomfortable reminiscences I very much wanted to forget. Between shame and pride, I remained speechless. Mbadiwe expected me to say something, but I looked at him with an air of absent-mindedness. Conflict of emotions impeded my immediate response.

But Mbadiwe was in an inspired mood. My empty gaze at him did not seem to bother him. He deliberately turned to others and continued to talk about his general interest in Nigerian education. And once more he turned to me and said: "I am particularly concerned about this youngman. I am not going to allow restrictions by his father's untimely death to prevent him from getting education. He may be another Azikiwe, who knows. He may be an author or an inventor, who knows." Then in a semi- boastful manner he concluded: "as long as I live in the East of Nigeria, a fine young man like this can never suffer loss!" "Thank you, thank you!" sounded everywhere by his listeners. Then he went further: "the youngman himself is too young to understand his own people. Nnewi people are Ibos, but they are different. They are one of the few peoples in Iboland as rich as they are, and still have the heart to allow the son of their greatest man to suffer a national humiliation like this. It has become a national scandal that this youngman went to Lagos several times with a promise to go to America, and as many times, was disappointed. Nnewi people looked money in the face as if it meant everything. To me money which is not used for a general progress is not worth having." He paused as if for a reply. There was silence as if in Job's sick chamber when the voice from the whirlwind silenced Job and his three friends. Mbadiwe sipped from his glass. One of

his friends remarked: "I like your spirit Mr. Green, and if we have three men like you in this part of the country, things will go well."

Mbadiwe's interest in me came as a happy surprise. I had never met him before, although I recollected having seen him once in Kano, but then I did not even bother to know his name. Now, his talk about me and my future sounded like a father's voice. As I was thinking about this, he turned to me again and posed his original question about how much it would cost to study in America for four years, and restated his readiness to give me a cheque for the same. This time, I could not afford to remain silent. I decided not to accept his offer and therefore I told him that my people were able and ready to pay my expenses in the United States. They had delayed me because there was some family political question.

There was some truth in what I told Mbadiwe, but my relatives did not give me that reason for their tardiness in defraying my expenses. Mbadiwe disagreed with me. He said: "Yes, Mr Orizu, I hear all that, but I have learned from reliable sources that money is the cause of your delay. You Nnewi people always hide your true feelings from others. You better tell me the whole truth. I don't come here to bluff you with money. I only want to help you because I feel to do so from my heart." "No Sir," I exclaimed, "I don't hide my feelings." "Well," said Mbadiwe, "Your reason is not convincing." Others with him tried to persuade me to say something, but I insisted on my point. Incidentally, the time for train departure was at hand. The passengers started to rush into the coaches. Mbadiwe asked those with him to get down while he went with me alone to the next station. He instructed his chauffeur to drive fast to the next station where he would come down.

The train left Kaduna Junction. It was now Mbadiwe and I alone in my compartment. Mbadiwe's disposition changed. He was no more a hilarious fellow in company of others. He drove his points with poignance, and told me in no uncertain terms that I was under illusions of hope if I thought that my people were going to finance my education in America as promptly as I anticipated. "*Your people do not understand you, my dear youngman. Their love for you is your trouble. They don't want you to leave Nnewi. We who know your family*

understand why and to an average Iboman, there is nothing hidden about it. In your fathers name, I vow to help you". He said that he was moved by a passion of patriotism and for personal sympathy toward my family.

I was in no position to argue further. His point struck home. I told him that I found it difficult to accept a huge sum of money for my education from him without the knowledge of any person in my family. Mbadiwe pointed out that he was a good friend of my cousin, O. N. Ulasi of Kano, and that he would be happy to lend the money to Ulasi in my presence. He promised to communicate Ulasi at Kano and to advise him to come to Minna with me for the money.

The train arrived at the next station – the Kaduna North. I looked through the window and saw an American car (Hudson Terra Plane) of Mbadiwe, standing. Mbadiwe gave me a firm hand-shake. Comforted me. With an unalterable resolution, and without any ludicrous ceremonial, he left me with hope. Is it not incredible to think of the brazen boldness with which Mbadiwe accepted the responsibility to do what I had hitherto considered impossible? The whole affair appeared unbelievable, but knowing Mbadiwe as a gold miner and the sponsor of two of the students who had already gone to America, I had reason to entertain some hope. Our train left Kaduna North. It was now about 10.30 p.m., and we were Kano bound. Sleep left my eyes. I began to think of what was happening to my life. The whole series of episodes seemed like a fantastic dream. I said to myself: "Can death come from friends and life from strangers? Is Oguonu's prophetic verdict at Aba that my "time to leave the country has come," going to be fulfilled? The weather was clement and warm. The steel wheels of the train were grinding on the rail as they propelled northward in the night. I felt every power of my mind moving. I wanted to reach for the sky for joy. And yet it was a cautious joy. Memories of past illusions never die. I had been eluded before. I might be eluded again.

Remembering however that Mbadiwe was an Arondizuogu man, I felt doubly sure. Their relationship with my ancestors was of a long standing. Like my own ancestors, they responded to [illegible] ideals.

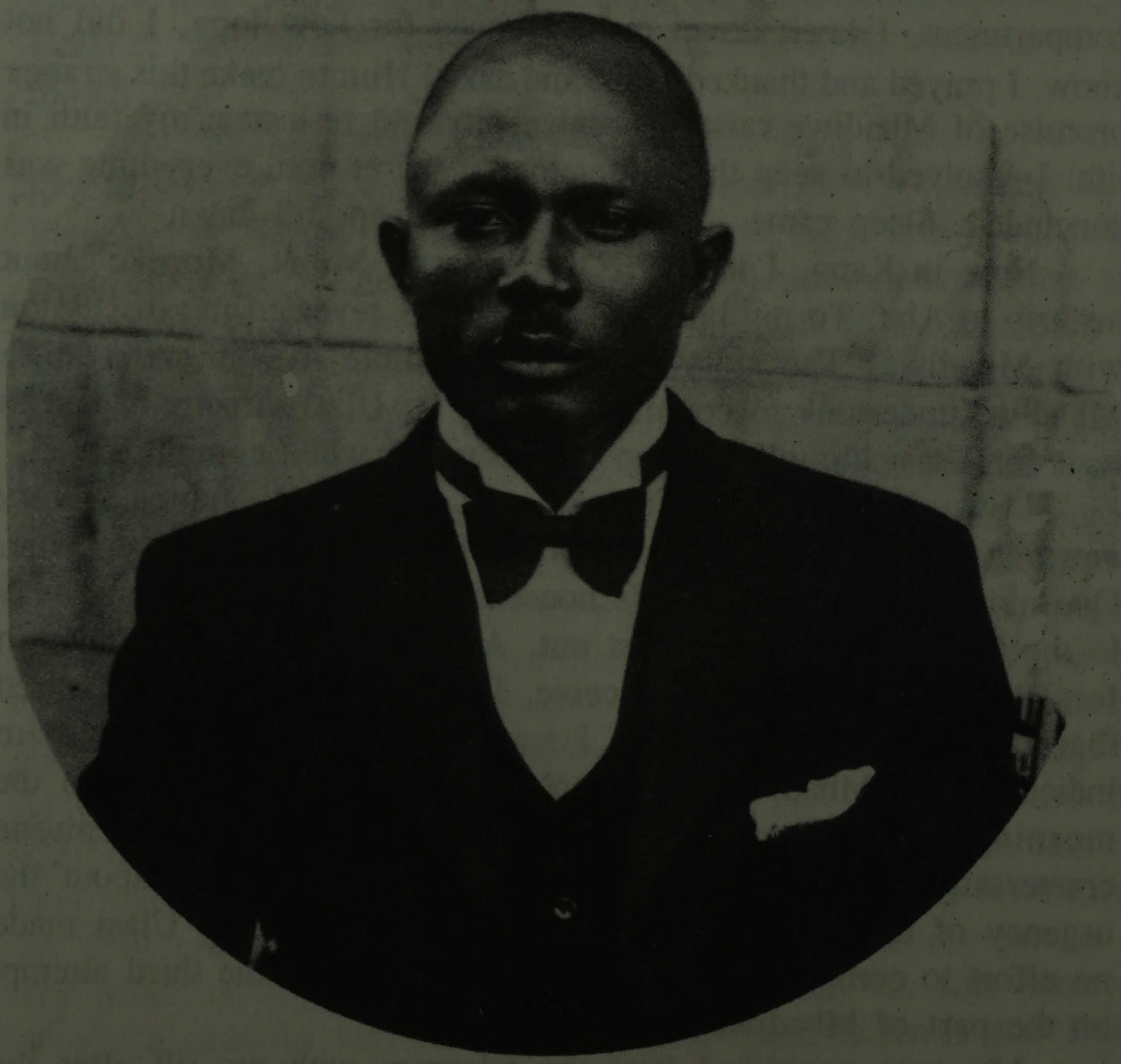
Arohs never permitted their words to go unhonoured. Such would infringe upon their *amour-proper*. Besides, Mbadiwe's offer for help was not solicited. It fell down upon my life's stage like *deus exmachina*. It was both sudden and prophetic, and appeared to sing a hymn of destiny at the closing of what to many had become a tragic drama of life. Had my life not been an object of agonizing conflicts? Did I not emerge from Aba conference carrying a load of promises, believing, just to believe because there was nothing else to do?

I remembered God. Being fortunate to be alone in my compartment, I knelt down on my knees for how long, I did not know. I prayed and thanked Him, and asked Him to make this strange promise of Mbadiwe raise me above pity and re-instate my faith in life. I resolved to keep the matter totally secret until everything was concluded. Sleep came – it was a sound sleep, till dawn.

Now in Kano, I told N. O. Ulasi and M. N. Moneke about my trip to Aba. To my brother Onyenkuzi I revealed my discussion with Mbadiwe. The story sounded incredible to him. And since Mbadiwe undertook to communicate N. O. Ulasi directly, I had to wait for Ulasi himself to keep me informed when communicated.

Days started to fly off again and Ulasi said nothing. Every morning everybody went to his office for work. I stayed at home. One morning, I was at Ulasi's house by 10.30 a.m. He went away to the firms, his wife was just out. A postman brought a telegram for Ulasi and asked me to receive. I signed for it and discovered that it came from Mbadiwe. I read it anxiously. The telegram indicated that Mbadiwe had telephoned Ulasi from Kaduna in the morning following our meeting; that following the telephone conversation a telegram was also sent reminding Ulasi about the urgency of the matter. To the two moves, my cousin Ulasi made no effort to comply. The telegram I received was the third attempt on the part of Mbadiwe.

My eyes opened. I kept the telegram with me till after the dinner at about 8.30 p.m. Then I requested my cousin to give me a private audience. We went into his bedroom, and I handed him the telegram, telling him that I had read it. After reading it, he blinked



Chief J.C. Ulasi. He was a well-known Nnewi patriot, leader and businessman based at Aba. He assumed the responsibility of a father in my life because of his loyalty to and love for my father.

his eyelids with terrific frequency that I could scarcely see his eye balls, and he mumbled a few words which I did not understand because I was filled with indignation.

I did not give him the chance to talk. I felt that it was my hour. I made two categorical demands:

1. "Give me the money to go to America or
2. Let us proceed to Minna to get it from Mbadiwe.

Nothing else would satisfy me." I threatened suicide if no action was taken as I demanded. My cousin was a kind and sensible person. He made up his mind quickly. "We go to Minna to meet Green," he said.

We boarded the train to Minna. We arrived at Minna Station at 1.00 a.m. in the morning. By 1.30 a.m. we knocked at Mbadiwe's door. I slept with Adioye at the back of the house whereas Ulasi was given a camp bed in the main building. In the morning Mbadiwe expressed a great satisfaction in seeing us. He took us round the important places in Minna. We visited his gold mining camps. In the evening we went to the African Club where they entertained us with tennis game. In his home we received royal entertainment throughout.

What amazed me was Mbadiwe's alertness about the general progress of Nigeria and his dogged determination to see that Eastern Nigeria developed evenly with others. For example, he wanted to know from me how many university graduates the Ibos had at the time. I could remember only five of them namely – Alvan Ikoku, Enoch Oli, Nnamdi Azikiwe, S. E. Onwu and Louis Mbanefo. Those were the Ibo graduates residing in Nigeria that we remembered. He felt the number was dismally shameful. What I gathered was that Mbadiwe was indeed a philosopher and a capitalist, who believed in money as a means and never an end. His interest in money was negative. His heart and soul dwelt in the remote edifice of humanity's welfare. Petty thoughts and provincial ideas had no place in his bosom.

Finally, we entered into a conference concerning my education. It lasted for only ten minutes. Those were ten fateful minutes, which

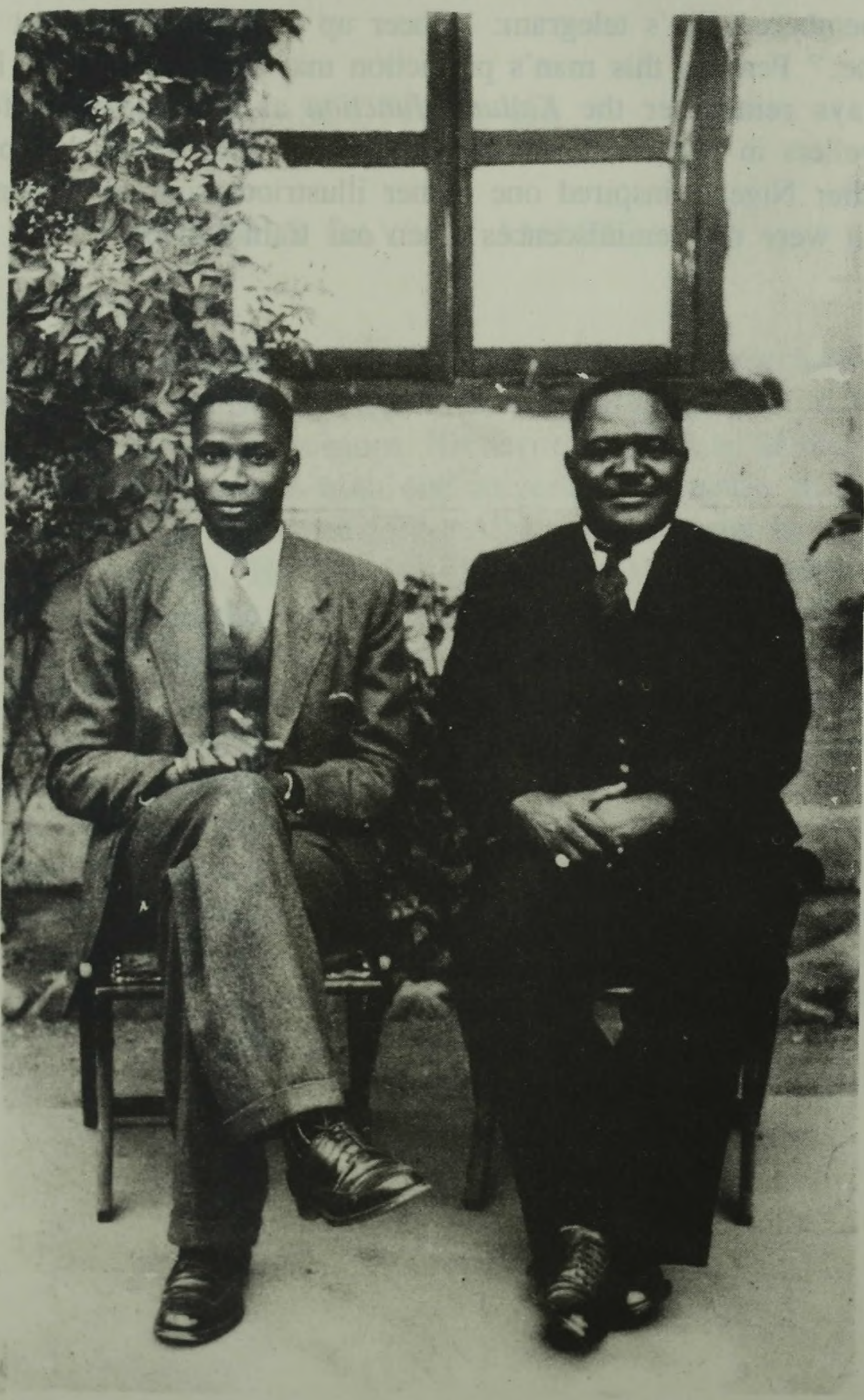
turned my fate from utter failure to ultimate triumph. Mbadiwe brought his cheque book, his fountain pen in his hand and the talk began.

Mbadiwe: "Well, Mr. Ulasi, how much will Mr. Orizu need for his studies in America? I guess eight hundred pounds?"
Ulasi: "I don't remember the exact amount."
Orizu: "I do remember. Zik said fifty pounds per annum or two hundred pounds in all, excluding transport money and other things. The total is about four hundred pounds."
Mbadiwe: "Whatever you all agree, upon, I have promised to give the loan. You will sign the loan for him Mr. Ulasi?"
Ulasi: "Yes."
Mbadiwe: "But how much do you need exactly?"
Ulasi: "We have got the money for school expenses while in America."
Mbadiwe: "Oh! Is that so? So he has no problem now. What about the transport money?"

At this juncture, I did not allow Ulasi to say a word before I stated emphatically, that it may take eighty pounds for transportation, and that that amount was not available. Ulasi seeing how I felt, agreed with me.

Mbadiwe: "Well that is all right – here is the cheque for eighty pounds. Your people will pay me back. I trust Mr. Ulasi your cousin."
Orizu: "Thank Sir."
Ulasi: "Dalu." – smiling.

The conference ended. We started on our way to Minna Railway Station. My thought flashed back to Kaduna Junction where I met Mbadiwe and where he first promised to help me financially for my education. "Kaduna Junction" I repeated it silently to myself. What would that junction mean to me in the future? If indeed I ever join the seven argonauts to win the American golden fleece, how could I explain the twist of human life and the miracle of God? Why did God fulfil His promise to me at this junction where the



With Chief Green Mbadiwe at Green Hotel Kadunna 1946, reflecting on the miracle of Kaduna Junction in 1938.

nation's travellers must meet, no matter where they go? Then I remembered Zik's telegram: "Cheer up youngman, the best is yet to be." Perhaps this man's prediction may turn true. If so, I shall always remember the *Kaduna Junction* as a rendezvous for all travellers in Nigeria, but more as a chosen spot where the spirit of mother Nigeria inspired one of her illustrious sons to redeem me. Such were my reminiscences when our train arrived.

SECTION III

EARLY DAYS IN AMERICA

His early days in America were full of excitement, indecision and search for truth. This was made critical by absolute lack of funds to implement any of his decisions. His desire for the kind of education he needed made him run from one university to another in a very short moment. He wanted to forget Africa momentarily in order to understand America. He was forced to leave all his colleagues in the Eastern part of the United States and proceeded to the Midwest to be the first indigenous African ever to register with the Ohio State University. It was during this period that he was exposed to circumstances that brought out from him, the extraordinary spirit of independence, creativity and self-confidence. He worked his way through college. The Second World War was on and he was challenged to present Africa to American public. This brought about his famous radio broadcast in Cincinnati on Sunday August 16, 1942[1], historically, the first of its type. He developed many ideas from every experience he got. Upon these ideas he built all he did for Africa during his life in America.

– Editor

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1 See text of the broadcast in appendix 1.

Chapter Ten

ON A HIGHWAY TO LIBERTY

To be overwise is to ossify and the scruple-monger ends by standing stock-still. Now the man who has his heart on his sleeve, and a good whirling weather cock of a brain, who reckons his life as a thing to be dashingly used and cheerfully hazarded, makes a very different acquaintance of the world...

– Robert Louis Stevenson.

We left Minna for Kano. In the mean time, the cheque for eighty pounds was sent to Azikiwe in Lagos to purchase the ticket for my trip to New York. Now I decided to go to Aba for the rest of the money. I left for Aba to see what Chief J. C. Ulasi could do at this exciting moment as N. O. Ulasi assured Mr. Green Mbadiwe. I travelled on the Southern Limited Train.

On the third day the train arrived at Enugu about 4.00 a.m. The railway officers there told me that a message from Azikiwe came to Kano after my train had left there, and the message was relayed to them from Kano to stop me from proceeding to Aba, but to proceed to Lagos immediately in order not to miss my boat for which payment was already made.

I was confused. Some strange pain and passion possessed me, I veiled my face with sarcastic smile because my fate was being tumbled with both delight and despair. Azikiwe's electric response was a matter for spirited joy, but the realization that I might have to meet him the third time in Lagos without my School fees stupefied my every thought. Courage may deepen into bravado, and faith into idiocy.

I enquired from Enugu if there was any way I could speak to Chief J. C. Ulasi at Aba before leaving. Arrangement was promptly made and I spoke to Ulasi on the telephone about 4.45 a.m. In a nervous rush I told him about Mbadiwe's eighty pounds and Azikiwe's message which interrupted my continued journey to Aba. I put it to him to instruct me what to do; "must I proceed to Aba to get my school fees and other expenses, or shall I proceed to Lagos?" The Chief, in his polished, serene, meditative and dignified tone of voice advised me to proceed to Lagos. He would send the amount required to Azikiwe before I get to Lagos. That was two hundred and fifty pounds.

The blood inside of me was leaping flames as I boarded the Northern Limited Train from Enugu to Kano again in order to collect my personal belongings for Lagos. As soon as I arrived in Kano, I collected my things and left the city. My departure from Kano to Lagos was unceremonious. There was already a feverish undercurrent of contempt and scorn for my whole plan among friends and distant relatives.

Quite excusably, others had come to feel that the whole thing was a ballyhoo. In the then Nigeria, failure was a crime. To make unsuccessful experiments over an intangible project; to risk fortune, time or life over something which did not promise of immediate result or profit, exposed the adventurer to all sorts of ridiculous and vulgar references.

"Why doesn't he better go back to Nnewi and stop bothering people?" was a statement made by one Nnewi friend in Kano. He was right, only I thought differently, and the spirit in me refused to bow to the strains of poverty, much less succumb to the sardonic jokes of the smug apostles of the status quo.

So, without a "send-off" or a "good-bye", that quiet December morning of 1938 dawned in the Ancient Kano City. There was no one to lead me to the railway station except a good friend Agbanusi Anadu who was later joined by a cousin William Nwagbo. On my lonely walk to the station, I entered into the Lagos Stores, a branch of the United African Company in Kano, with hope that my brother Onyenkuzi, who was employed there, would join me along with

Anadu to the station. I was sadly disappointed. My brother considered it too much of a risk to ask his European Masters for a few minutes to bid me good-bye at the station at that great moment in our lives. I had to restrain the unfulfilled filial emotion which was a part of tender sensitivities of my early youth. But I shed tears as I left his store.

Our train stopped at Zaria. There I was met by two luminous personalities – S. D. N. Okoye and A. J. Anazodo. They stood anxiously waiting for our train's arrival. Okoye was one of the most vigorous, courageous, rebellious, patriotic and altruistic persons ever born in Nnewi. He was all heart and affection and sympathy for me. He promptly promised me his financial help as soon as "you get over there." Both he and Anazodo gave me words of advice and encouragement. The enthusiasm, warmth and zeal in their eyes lit a fire in my fighting spirit.

At Minna railway station, Green Mbadiwe was proudly standing by. On arrival of the train he walked to me in a triumphal mood. He felt and said that my departure would make him happy. He sent words of greetings to Ojike and the two Mbadiwes – Ozuomba and George, who left over a month ago to Lincoln University. My trip from Minna to Lagos was an anxious one. My heart was throbbing with mingled sensations. It was the darkest hour nearing the final breaking of the day.

Zik was waiting for me when I arrived in Lagos. I was his guest in his 72 King George Avenue, Yaba home. My first question was whether he had received the money from Chief J. C. Ulasi. He had not. I had only five days more to leave Lagos. We waited with aggravated anxiety as the time drew nearer and nearer. It was now a matter of life and death to me. I resolved secretly that if for anything I failed to go to America this time, I would not live. Men of experience and education are mind readers. Zik seemed to have apprehended my feelings. He never asked me a question about the fund until the last evening I was supposed to spend in Lagos. He was very tactful about it.

He first invited me to a dinner and from there to the cinema. I must confess that I could neither enjoy the dinner nor the cinema.

I felt that I was in a fool's paradise, awaiting the final touch to a series of tragedies that had become my life's journey. I found it torturing to think of the coming morning when I was to be told to return to the provinces once more to get my school fees. Perhaps the world was not going to give me any further benefit of doubt. I might be told bluntly to abandon the struggle and cut my coat according to my size.

From the cinema, Zik and I went to his office. It was already late in the night. We held the last and fateful conference. I was guessing what Zik had in store for me. He opened the talk:

Zik: "Christopher, here is your passport. Everything is now in order. Here, your ticket to Liverpool and then to New York."

Orizu: "Thank sir."

Zik: "So in a few weeks you'll be in New York City?"

Orizu: "I don't know Sir."

Zik: "New York, Nnukwu Obodo!"[1] shrugging his shoulders in awe.

Orizu: "Why did you say so about New York?"

Zik: "You'll find out when you get there".

Orizu: "Sir, tell me exactly the kind of behaviour most acceptable to the University authorities over there. Shall I wear short-knickers and shirts and appear quite humble?"

Zik: "No! No! America is a different country. The people are broadminded. They expect you to work hard. They want discipline. But they want you to assert yourself fearlessly. You should wear your best suits, look decent and confident. There, if you don't say you are, nobody has time to recognize you. Be proud as an African and show them that Africans are proud of themselves. You are a representative of African culture there".

Orizu: "I understand Sir."

Zik: "There is one other point. I trust that you are the one to help Ojike to keep order among the entire Nigerian Students. I have considered Ojike the oldest and most experienced

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1 Meaning "New York a Mighty City."

among you. By the courageous way you fought your way, I believe you will do well in America. Let me know whenever thing goes wrong among you all."

Orizu: "Yes Sir."

Zik: "But I am seriously puzzled about your finances. Three times now have your people disappointed you. You are to depart tomorrow morning and there is no money in hand for your school expenses. I have used Green Mbadiwe's money for your transport expenses. Look here, what am I to do about it? Suppose you get over there and no one cares to send you any funds, what will you do?"

Orizu: "I don't know, Sir, but I shall go. I still trust my people. J. C. Ulasi will never disappoint me. There must be some reason why he was unable to fulfil his promises. Besides, there are other relatives who promised help. I believe they will be encouraged to do something as soon as they understand that I had already gone.

Zik: "Yes, but suppose they disappoint you as now?"

Orizu: "I shall work as you did when you were there."

Zik and I planned code words with which I could cable him if I got into a serious financial difficulty. He promised to help me whenever matters became serious. But like most boys who wanted to go to America, I was not interested in Zik's thoughts for tomorrow. All I wanted was to get to New York. Perhaps, money must come from somewhere. Risk meant nothing to me.

Zik and I left his office. We went to his Yaba home where we spent the latter part of the night and the following morning talking about America and the life over there. In a matter like that, Zik was a good conversationalist. There was no possible thing he did not mention for my information, from eating of hot dogs to dating the girls; from jim-crowism in Washington to mixed marriage in New York; from share croppers in Arkansas to Ford and Rockefellers in Detroit and New York. But the whole story remained vague to me, until I lived in the U.S.A. for sometime.

The next morning I left Lagos for Liverpool. There were a good many friends including Alfred Onyiuke, A. K. Blankson and two other Nigerians, John Agwuncha Nwosu and L. P. Ojukwu who bade me good bye. In Accra, I was fortunate to meet Kenneth Dike who was an Achimota College Student on his way to Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone. Typical of Awka people, Kenneth was a handsome youth with cosmopolitanism about him which made his company most enjoyable all the way to Freetown. We discussed the future of Africa in terms of our academic ambition. How much I wished that Kenneth was also travelling to the United States. His, was also the burning ambition to go overseas. I accompanied him to the premises of Fourah Bay College where I had the opportunity of meeting some friends once more.

The departure of Kenneth in Freetown left me lonely on the boat. I was not used to European diet. No other Nigerian passenger was there to talk my native language. For the first time in my life, I found myself in a totally strange atmosphere. People were all strangers to one another. The boat was tossing majestically with the ocean waves, and that turned my stomach upside down. With strange and sometimes tasteless English food my predicament became critical in my own little world. For days, I could not eat, until I was fortunate to come across two African crew boys who offered me garri and okro-agbono soup with hot, red pepper. I paid for this until we landed in Liverpool. I was first greeted by Reverend Ekaette of Africa Church Missions in Liverpool, in whose house I lodged. Reverend Ekaette was a wonderful host with African psychology and sympathy. He impressed me as a man of God with a stout heart to serve his race in a strange land. He lacked lustre, but his spiritual effervescence could not escape observation even to an acquaintance. With him I was able to visit many historic places in Liverpool before my departure to the United States.

"S. S. Samaria" of the "Cunard White Star Line" was the boat that took me to New York from Liverpool. There was a world of difference between the "M.V. Accra" and the "S. S. Samaria." "Accra" represented the old world with its decadent cynicism, introversive coldness and obsequious resignation. "Samaria" represented the new world with

its radiant joy for living, exterior charm, pleasant humour and liberal cosmopolitanism. From here a glimpse of what was yet to come began to pierce through the horizon.

There was a lot of fun on the "Samaria." Passengers were all white except myself. But who cared about color here? None. Passengers were too busy trying to stimulate joy in each other; to get acquainted; to speak about the plight of the Jews in Hitler's Germany; to discuss the impending horrors of war that loomed over Europe; to play games of cards and ludo and listen to the world news; to enjoy the music and embrace the sea breeze which was a luxurious heritage of all voyagers.

I remember one incident on board the ship. Apart from dances, table tennis, swimming and cinema, we engaged in make-believe horse races. It was an entertaining gamble. I entered five times. I lost my money in the first, second and third entries. Here I made my way to my cabin with seventy and fifty four cents which I won in the last two races. Counting my former losses and equating with the present gains, I balanced seventy four cents profit. I thanked my God that I did not lose any nickel in my first and last adventure in gambling. I wrote a short letter to a friend in Nigeria at once, and the contents showed my real mood then:

"Dear Mr. "X"

Today, 25/2/39, we are on board the "S. S. Samaria" heading for New York City. I feel that I have already seen the New World. I meet the Jews here. They are no different from the white people you see in Nigeria. They tell me about Hitler. Everybody thinks that the war may come any moment. Well, war or no war, I am glad I am able to leave Nigeria at last.

The horse race we have today on board this ship is another sign of what lines my life will always follow. I attempted thrice and failed, but my two last attempts brought me victory. I know that I shall always laugh last and laugh best ..., you remember my failures in Nigeria? ...

Yours sincerely
C. Nwafor Orizu."

There were several Jewish refugees from Germany on board that ship escaping to the United States. They told us stories of Hitler's atrocities against the Jews. It was then that I discovered that race prejudice existed even among the white race themselves. The Jews were not black Africans or yellow Asiatics or red Indians. Why then did Hitler oppress them? I did not understand, but I was consoled that after all, the Africans were not the only victims of savage elements of racial bitterness. My attitude towards Hitler changed from vague doubts about his sanity into a crystallized hatred for his barbaric terrorism. True, I did not hate the Germans, nor did I fail to appreciate Hitler's effort to show an excessive love for his country. What I hated was his being personal where he should be universal, and thus allowed his patriotism to run into a riotous movement which started with a phiiosophy of local nihilism, and culminated in international pandemonium.

Safely, our boat arrived in New York City in a cold winter night of 1939. The first gentleman that talked to me was an American Immigration Officer. Like Americans. he was simple and without intimidating, cold, official ceremonies. His English was rather fast and breezy for me. No more talk-half and swallow-half of the British Officials. This man spoke like an old acquaintance and acted as if he was particularly happy that I was there. "Your passport please" he requested, and as he opened it, we entered into question and answer period:

Officer: "Have you come as a student?"
Orizu: "Yes."
Officer: "Wonderful! How long are you supposed to stay?"
Orizu: "Long enough to finish my education, about five years."
Officer: "Fair enough. You are going to study at Lincoln University?"
Orizu: "Yes."
Officer: "How much money do you have on you now?"
Orizu: "Ten Dollars."
Officer: "Do you have any writings or letter with you?"
Orizu: "Yes, here is a letter of introduction given to me by Mr. Nnamdi Azikiwe for the Executive Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. in New York City."

The Officer opened and read the letter and gave it back to me.

Officer: "I see in your passport that your father is a paramount chief. Are you to rule your people when you return? Are you a Prince under British?"
Orizu: No answer.
Officer: "Are you under British rule over there?"
Orizu: "Yes."
Officer: "Okey my good fellow – never mind. You are a lucky chap on the highway to liberty.

He gave me a most warm and hearty handshake and directed me to a lady standing by who was a representative of the Travellers' Aid Society.

As soon as the Immigration Officer handed me back my passport and marked my luggages with chalk I knew that I had been accepted by America, that I was now on the soil of the New World where Azikiwe got the inspiration for the emancipation of Africa. What happened then and thereafter reminded me without being told, that as an African from a Colonial country, I had set my foot on "A Highway to Liberty." Not liberty to be a libertine, but liberty to come open into the arena of life's combat, to face obstacles with a feeling that here was a society which understood the problems of the under-dogs, and ready to encourage them in their legitimate struggle for self-discovery and creative endeavours, even empty handed.

Chapter Eleven

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

The Lincoln University Campus was isolated on the top of a green hill. I found it a lonely village with the chastity of a virgin. It was indeed a place of learning. Nothing to distract, as indifferent as knowledge, as confident as adjacent hills, as detached as science and as interpretative of nature as philosophy, full of devoted men of learning and spiritual insight who meant to serve the cause of humanity through Lincoln University.

– Nwafor Orizu.

As soon as I left the Immigration Officer, the young lady representing the Traveller's Aid Society took charge. She beamed her intriguing eyes with an expression of lively radiance of a kind sister, and asked me: "Are you the African student going to study at Lincoln University?"

Orizu: "Yes."
Miss "X": "Have you been to New York before?"
Orizu: "No."
Miss "X" "How do you like it here?"
Orizu: "I think it is wonderful."
Miss "X": "Wonderful! Why?" with a smile.
Orizu: "Everybody moves fast."
Miss "X" "Where did you study English?"
Orizu: "In Nigeria."
Miss "X: "Oh, you speak so well." Then she continued: "I guess you want to proceed to Lincoln University, don't you?"

Orizu: "Of Course"
Miss "X" "I guess we better send a telegram to Lincoln University." She received thirty five cents from me for telegram which she sent immediately from a telephone booth there.

Without giving a breathing space, we got a taxi cab for Pennsylvania Railroad Station. On our way I had my first glance of the New York City from inside. But it was at night! Every place was ablaze with electric light. There were gigantic buildings beyond description. I saw some double-deck buses on which was an inscription: "WELCOME TO NEW YORK CITY."

What a sight. What a sound psychology for the people of this other heaven to greet strangers from other lands including their own country men from other cities through the medium of many two-storey buildings with passengers, running on wheels around the city? This apparent interest of the young lady in ensuring that I had necessary attention and direction in a land where I knew no one; the fact that a voluntary agency was set up to help travellers, no matter their nationality, color, creed, or sex was in itself enough to make any person fall in love with America.

I joined the train to Philadelphia that night. Trains here moved much faster than the Nigerian trains. When we arrived at the Broad Street Station in Philadelphia, I was tired and hungry. I bought a cup of coffee and a piece of cake for fifteen cents. I was told that I had to wait for another local train to take me to Lincoln University. There was no place to sleep, so I sat on a bench at the station beside my luggage. At 3.30 a.m. a railway officer woke me and warned that our train to Lincoln would arrive at 5.30. a.m. I did not sleep any further till the train arrived.

We came to Lincoln University at about 8.30 a.m. that cold morning of March, 1939. I was met at the station by Professor Labaree of Sociology Department. He was a tall, slim, grey-haired elderly man. Bespectacled and polite, he ushered me into his car and we drove to the campus. My concept of a University was out of this world. I was expecting to see a place full of marble edifices,

halls of mirror, carpeted corridors and rare-to-be-found furnitures manufactured by the University Engineers. I was expecting to see the professors with long beards like Jewish Rabbis. I looked for young instructors with specially parted hair, and with wizard-looking faces constantly wearing their academic gowns of many colors.

I soon learned that mine was a quixotic idea. Neither the campus nor the professors proved me right. The campus itself was isolated on the top of a green hill with all the nakedness of nature around. There was nothing artificial or ornamental. There was no atmosphere of urbanity like the New York City. It was a lonely village with the chastity of a virgin. It was indeed a place of learning. There was nothing to distract. The University buildings were not particularly impressive. Most of them were old. The premises itself was as a whole uninviting when it comes to mere features and planning. It was as indifferent as knowledge, as confident as adjacent hills, as detached as science, and as interpretative of nature as philosophy. A young African coming to the United States to study would naturally look for glamour than for realities. But Lincoln campus in Chester County Pennsylvania bore the mark of reality. It lacked the air of delusive fascination. No emotional sophistication, and this was further confirmed by a total absence of female students on the campus.

The faculties were made up of devoted men of learning and spiritual insight, who meant to serve the cause of humanity through Lincoln University. Everyone of them considered himself a teacher, a father and an inspirer. The president, Dr. Wright was a monument of intellect, agility, industry and compassionate kindness. Dr. Frank T. Wilson, the Dean of Men seemed to be the most adept in understanding the psychology of the African students. He and his wife threw their home open to us. Their daughter, Ann, and their son, Frank were as intelligent as they were disciplined and friendly. Both the two children and their gay, circumspect and charming mother always entertained us with music, by playing piano in their home. Mrs. Wilson with a Master's degree from Columbia University was very much interested in African music. Dean Wilson commanded and used more vocabularies in English language than any other professor that ever taught me in the United States. His lecture class

was always crowded because every student wanted to study under him. He taught me college religion. He brought religious concepts into a new perspective. His religion did not deny the possibility of man. The mind of man is a restive horse in the physical frame-work of the body. That mind has high possibilities which is always tempered with the tragic handicaps of the physical body. Without religion the handicapped physical body would remain in one extreme while the unconquerable human mind remains on the other. It is through religious experience that a man can within himself, synthesize the unconquerable mind with the conquerable body in order to produce a real person with moral courage and effective personality within the social unit he finds himself.

Dr. Miller was the Dean of the College. A quick-tempered man with a great ambition to see the right done. He invited me to a first formal dinner after my arrival from Nigeria. With me was George Mbadiwe. It was a turkey dinner. I did not eat my regular meal at the University Dinning Hall because I wanted to have a good appetite for the turkey.

Dr. Miller picked the cutting knife and fork, instead of cutting the bird into its natural parts of the legs, the breasts and so forth, he began to slice the flesh into thin-blade pieces. I thought that he was only making a preliminary gesture. But alas! He started to throw those thin slices of meat into our plates. There was more quantity of vegetables than the meat in each plate, while the whole bird was still intact. Well, the dinner began after prayers. I threw the few slices of turkey meat into my mouth and asked for more. Dr. Miller served me with another thin slice which left me where I was – hungry. Poor me. I could not ask for more since everybody seemed satisfied with first service while I had gone through the second.

The evening was spoilt for me. Had I known, I would have had my dinner at the College Dinning Hall. In Africa of those days when a person was called to a dinner, anything served on the table was intended to be eaten whole. Sometimes, a goat, a lamb, or a pig would be baked or cooked whole and served to about three or four persons. The procedure was that the whole meat should be cut into pieces for consumption, and every person served himself to his

stomach full. No slicing. For one guest to finish one whole chicken in a dinner in Africa was nothing spectacular. I was therefore disappointed that even a leg of a turkey did not come to me. With all my gratitude and sweet memory of the Millers, I shall always remember that through their generosity to invite me to a dinner, I learnt my first lesson in controlling my stomach to take less even where there was more on the table to eat. There I learnt that Africa was also God's own country where democracy begins with the stomach.

What about the students, they were entirely African-Americans with a handful of Africans and West Indians. The first thing that struck me was that those American students were as boisterous, noisy, carefree as any other youths anywhere in Africa. That they were university students did not matter. They still considered themselves university "kids". They were a mischievous lot. In the dormitories, they whistled, rattled, knocked at the doors, wrote a lot of nonsense on the walls, stamped their feet on the floor, played radio aloud, threw things at people, called nick names – all for the fun of being young. Sometimes they engaged themselves in what they called "bull-sessions", where they talked a lot of irrelevancies with all the intriguing miscellany of gossips and jokes.

Behind this external mask of care-freeness, those students were a group of determined youths bent on breaking the chains of poverty and discrimination which the black race faced in America. A majority of them had to work their way through college. They came from certain sections of their own country where the black race was not permitted to register with the white schools. There, some of them emerged from areas where illiteracy still existed and life was a hand-to-mouth, share cropping affair. Some of them had never bought new suits all their life. All they knew were used suits from pawn shops. And when they were "Broke" they had to pawn the old suit back again. That, by the way, was one of the things that puzzled me: that despite these hardships, most of those students would not mind pawning their shoes, fountain pens, ties or an entire suit in order to raise a few dollars for a week-end dance!

That those students were serious enough to work so hard to get college education, and at the same time were willing to forego their hard-earned properties for the fun of dancing with girls and enjoying their company seemed paradoxical to me. Perhaps that aspect of American social norm was difficult for me to grasp, but I certainly would not consider it one of the envious college traditions to be imported into Africa. I am not a woman hater, but there is time and place for everything according to the means. To sell one's property such as text books and clothing in order to enjoy oneself only for a few hours in an evening was to me a sign of lack of self-control. If a student worked and earned some money and was willing to spend a part of it in a semester for dancing, this is proper and understandable, but for him to want to dance so much as to carry his properties from door to door for some one to buy at whatever price, was an act belonging to the undisciplined and the thoughtless. That was the way I looked at it.

There was a State Teachers' College for African-American women, situated in a small town environment of Cheyney. Every weekend, some students would drive to the college to dance. They "chip in" some dollars to buy gas or pay for the drive. I definitely refused to attend those dances. I never visited any dancing hall in Africa, much more to have danced with a girl the way Americans do. In Nigeria of that day, a youngman who used to attend those dances was considered delinquent.

One day, however, Ojike, Mbadiwe and Okala persuaded me to join them to Cheyney. I was to pay not even a nickel for the car ride. It was a wonderful experience. Cheyney girls were all attired in their formal dresses. The ball room there was like an illuminated flower garden, while delicious music profused the air. American boys from Lincoln were moving fast and strong, but some of the African students seemed timid and shy. Ojike, Okala, Mbadiwe and Ikejiani soon adjusted themselves to the tempo and mood of the evening. I sat down watching them dancing. That was the first time I saw African American girls in that number at one time.

I was not pleased with the way those African American girls dressed their hair. The smell and sight of their lipstick on their



With other African students at Lincoln University in 1939 including K.O. Mbadiwe, George Mbadiwe, A.K. Disu, Mbonu Ojike, Nnodu Okongwu, Kwame Nkrumah, Jones Quartey, Fitz John, J.B.C. Okala, Okechukwu Ikejiani, Nwankwo Chukwuemeka and Mbura.

lips, to say nothing of their finger polish which I thought was atrocious, made me sick. I could see no beauty in those things. All I saw was artificiality and frivolity. Some boys came to me and said, "Orizu come and meet some of the glamor girls." I met them. Looking at some of those girls as God made them, they were lustrous gems of nature. How much I had wished that they had been less artificial in order to give the unnameable hues of their skin color, their marvelously rounded chins and pretty dimples, their snow-white teeth and tender bodies, a proud stamp of the African background.

One significant thing I noticed that night was that as soon as a stranger was introduced to American girls, they felt free to ask a lot of questions which were both personal and general without any compunction. Furthermore, whenever music started a girl would not mind saying: "Don't you like to dance with me?" As I have said, some of those girls were indeed beautiful and attractive. I wanted to talk to them, or even to dance with them, had I known how to dance, but the idea of seeming to flirt with girls, particularly in the open was against all my home training. Besides, I did not then appreciate the attitude of the American girls, who after first introduction, seemed to be aggressive and wanted to lead a man instead of waiting to be led. I was not going to permit a girl to lead me. That was why I said a blunt "no" to any suggestion of dancing without offering any explanation. But you want to see some of the African students that evening. They were already "jitter bugging" and also enjoying a dance they called "hold-tight". I considered the whole affair a crazy business. But who cared for what I thought. They were even sorry for me.

Back to the campus, at the Lincoln Hall, I discovered that my room mate always made an "A" in all his classes. I wondered why, and determined to know. After a couple of months I discovered his secret. He was a text book expert. Most of the questions come directly from the prescribed text books, even though assignments may be given in form of collaterals. While others were busy expanding their knowledge on a subject by reading other authors in conjunction with the author of the text book, this student would stick to every word and every punctuation in the text book. The result was that he would

more or less memorise the entire text book and reproduce same during the examinations. Besides, I noticed that he did not take part in any extra curricular activities on the campus. Students joined in one activity or another outside the academic interest. Most of us from Africa participated in tracks and soccer. Kwame Nkrumah was our football captain. American boys preferred their own brand of football which they played with hand and foot, basket ball, lawn tennis and so forth. But this particular student would have none of these. He was on his text books.

I found his method to be rather a sham, hence I lost interest in his academic record. I watched his later educational development. The net result was that in ordinary circumstances he was unable to put up any balanced argument over any issue where wide knowledge was required. He developed certain eccentricity which disturbed his mental equilibrium and ended in quasi nervous chaos.

I drew certain conclusions out of this experience. First, a student could easily ruin his educational balance under American system if he would stick to his text books only. He could pass his examination and impress some busy professors who had no time to pay individual attention to student's methods of study. He could certainly and gloriously accumulate lots of degrees without any deep and wide knowledge of the subjects he studied. This might lead to self deceit, ending in frustration long afterwards. Second, American University education was based, to a great extent, on the principle of individual initiative. The knowledge was there. Facts leading to understanding were available in the libraries. Instruments which would aid the human senses to the discovery of scientific truths were there in the laboratories. But how far an individual was willing to absorb those facts in reality rested with him. Hence two students could graduate from the same university, and yet their range of knowledge, their faculty for comprehension of observable and empirical phenomena would differ like day and night. They could receive the same degree from the same department and yet one would be really an educated man, while the other became a mere window dressing for the ignoramuses.

The fault, in my opinion, was not with the system of American education. The American educational philosophy believed in drawing out that which was in a student, and not imposing from without something not present within. If the stuff of self-reliance, industry and honesty was in the character of a student, he would certainly be honest and curious enough to read his collaterals and engage in wide and deep aspects of a subject without trying to be "smart" through being a text book expert. Text books were like guides that pointed out the lamp posts to pedestrians on the high way of knowledge. They did not and could not tell how the road was made, why the lamp posts were there. They did not and could not give details of where each of the cross-roads might lead to, or how bridges were built over rough currents. To understand those details, they must seek information from, and acquaint themselves with materials from beyond the text books.

From my Lincoln Hall room-mate, I packed to Randall Hall which was considered the best building on the campus. It was most expensive to board there. Ojike joined me. Students there were generally more sober and seemed to have better home training – being those who came from the higher income bracket!

One morning, Mbadiwe told me that someone from "Afro-American," a Baltimore Weekly, wanted to take our pictures. Mr. Paul Davis, a bright Lincolnian made the arrangement. The photographer asked us many questions in an atmosphere of friendliness. He said that they read about us in the "West African Pilot." I never realized that anything we discussed was going to hit the newspaper headline. I did not know what was "Afro-American." I had never read it before then, nor was I aware of the fast American Press Reporters and their capacity to go wild with some strange news by refashioning all casual remarks of a stranger in order to thrill their readers. My only understanding was that a friend – An Afro-American came to take our picture, and will bring back those pictures to us.

A few days later, the campus was in tumult. American Students were excited to read from the "Afro-American" front page Headline about "AFRICAN ROYALTY AND MILLIONAIRE AT LINCOLN

UNIVERSITY." I was called the blue blood. Mbadiwe was the designated millionaire, while Quartey was described as the Gold Coast editor. Our pictures covered the front page of the paper. The whole thing took me by surprise. But I was simply amazed when some African students accused us of publicity mongering.

My identity as a son of a Nigerian ruler did not impress me. There was nothing ignoble in being a member of the nobility, but there was nothing great in depending on birth as a passport to achievement. I came to America not to play on my birth, but to prove through humility, endurance, hardwork, that my ancestors were worthy of their title in the Nigerian Community to which they belonged. I was therefore, indeed disturbed when I was accused by some colleagues of being a publicity seeker.

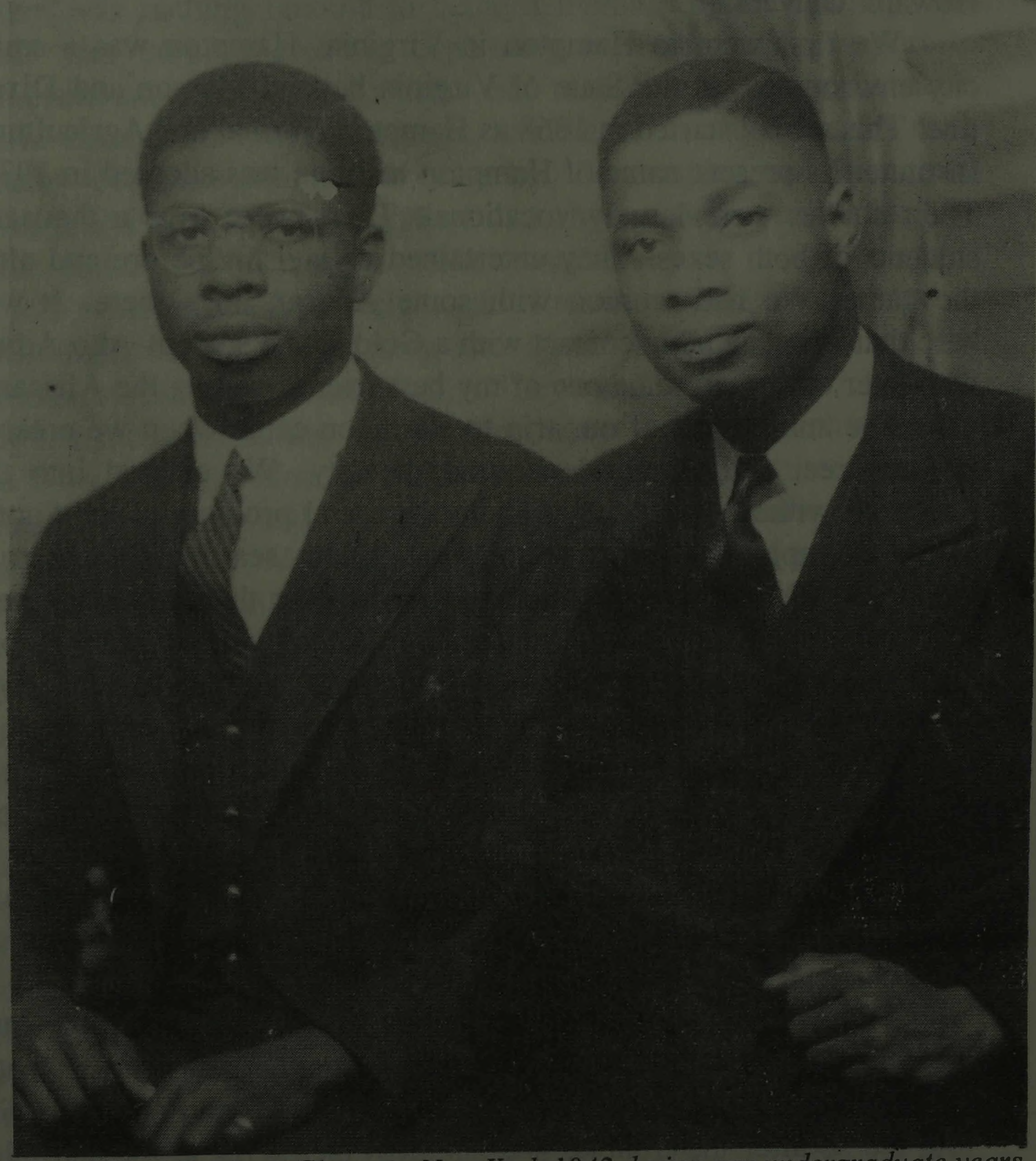
I protested to Dr. Wright, the President, who advised me to make light of the whole thing and ignore both the press and the attitude of the African students. "They might be jealous" he said. But the most disgusting aspect came when it appeared that one of the boys wrote to Nnamdi Azikiwe, and apparently misrepresented Mbadiwe, Quartey and myself, because Azikiwe thereafter published his reaction in the "West African Pilot" showing that he was informed by "more responsible ones among them" that some of those he sent to Lincoln were playing "Joneses ...." I considered Zik's newspaper comment a surprise. Zik did not write to me to find out the facts. Although he was in Nigeria, but he knew more about American Journalism than we did at that time. I did not even think it expedient for him as our father, to discuss the matter in the newspaper like that without previous warning, that is, if even it was true, that we were guilty of publicity mongering in America. I was much more confused because, after all, that publicity was based on information from the "West African Pilot" where Zik described Mbadiwe as an African millionaire, and stated that because of my education I suspended chieftaincy. What Joneses then were we trying to become? Or, must human dignity bow to imposed poverty? Must we deny our birth right in a foreign land because of our colonial heritage? That to me seemed to be contrary to Zik's teaching.

I have mentioned that I was a member of the University soccer team. Our team was formidable in the year 1939. Okala was a champion while in Nigeria. Nwankwo Chukwuemeka, though short, was as swift as eagle when dribbling toward the opponent's goal. Kwame Nkrumah was good at right inside forward or in the full back. My favourite position was centre forward or right inside. We played against and won outside teams – Hampton Institute and Howard University.

We first went to Hampton in Virginia. Hampton was a small city environment in the State of Virginia beyond Masson and Dixon line. This school started in 1868 as Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute. Its present name of Hampton Institute was adopted in 1930. Their studies were largely vocational. There were over a thousand students of both sexes. They entertained us lavishly before and after the game. We had reunion with some African boys there. It was here that I first came in contact with a Gold Coast student Ako Adjei, who later on turned to be one of my best friends among the Africans.

The anti-climax of our trip to Hampton came when we entered into a street car for a ride around the city. We entered into the street car without any thought about the racial problem of the South. I, for example, sat down at the first vacant seat very close to a white girl. Other African students sat wherever they saw seats near other white passengers. As Africans, we talked uninhibitedly to one another about the strange scene of Virginia. Suddenly, the driver stopped the car and from his seat ordered us to go "way back" to find our seats. I told our boys "not to listen to that nonsense". Then the driver refused to move the street car any further until we complied. After a few minutes, I raised my voice and told the driver not to waste our time. Other African boys became angry at this unusual demand and reprimanded the driver. As soon as he knew that we were Africans, he apologised and we went on.

Funny, though, it may sound, but I discovered after the little incident that even the white girl near me appeared pleased that I sat beside her. She admired the accent of the African students. She told me so after the trouble, and she kept on gazing at me and other boys till we left the car. Two things came to my mind. Racial



With Ako Adjei from Ghana in New York 1942 during our undergraduate years.

prejudice did not always operate in the hearts of the average Southern whites. The behaviour of that white girl showed me that it was not the colour of the skin alone that caused the discrimination in the South. The driver's apology after knowing from where we came confirmed that he did not apologise because our skin colour had stopped to be black as that of African Americans. Racial discrimination is mainly based on other historical and environmental factors.

Our next soccer match was against Howard University team on their own ground in Washington D.C. Howard University was a much bigger institution than Hampton. It was chartered by the United States Congress in 1867 and was supported by Federal Government Fund. There were over 7,000 students (men and women). The cream of African American Youths studied there. Life seemed more exciting and enjoyable. The professors appeared more cosmopolitan and internationally oriented. The most interesting professor İ met was Dr. Ralph Bunche of United Nations fame. He was a professor of Political Science, and invited me to come and study under him, with a promise to provide me with some scholarships.

Although we won the soccer game, but my interest at Howard went beyond the physical exercise. I felt that Howard University was a place for me after going through its bulletin. They had more courses to offer in Political Science and Business Administration. That was in comparison with Lincoln. And Dr. Ralph Bunche's personal interest in me at our first meeting added more fuel to the fire. I decided that at the earliest opportunity, I would transfer to Howard University. Our soccer team went back to Lincoln triumphantly, after defeating Howard.

I wanted a degree in Political Science or Business Administration. Lincoln did not provide a wide field in either, but the at-homeness and the humanitarianism of Lincoln University, made me love the institution. The library was small, and as I look back now I feel that Lincoln University was then being cheated by the monied class of America. The institution deserved a large endowment from foundations and corporations in America. Through its liberal

admission of students from Africa, Lincoln had done more to introduce Americanism into Africa than billions of dollars used to stop communism from spreading there in Africa.

It was not an over statement to say that Lincoln University trained some Africans who laid the foundation of true African nationalism in the twentieth century – the first indigenous African Prime Minister Dr. Kwame Nkrumah from the Gold Coast. The largest African country is Nigeria. Nigerian nationalism was inspired by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. Those two stalwarts were the products of Lincoln. This does not take into account many other African authors, politicians, ministers of state, businessmen, university professors whose educational foundation was laid through the sympathetic understanding and encouragement for which Lincoln was famous.

But ambition is madness. Men have forfeited their lovers, children and even country or life in order to attain their object of ambition particularly when propelled by patriotism and altruism. It was in this spirit that I planned to leave my Lincoln University for another college.

My plan to leave Lincoln was therefore a risk I deliberately imposed upon myself, with an understanding that any trouble or difficulties I might encounter, I had no one to blame. Rather, I felt that Zik had done his duty by landing me in America. Any opportunity I might create for myself thereafter, I owed gratitude to the original encouragement from Azikiwe. It is true that Azikiwe knew that my course of study was not at Lincoln, but without many words from him, I was able to deduce some principle on which his mind was working. I grasped his inner desire to do the best he could, knowing quite well that any intelligent, honest and hardworking youth left anywhere in America, could achieve his ambition. It was not that he liked me to go and suffer in America, or that he deliberately wanted to thwart my educational programme by sending me to a college where he knew my courses were not adequately offered.

To reason this way, would amount to a show of absolute ignorance of the problem of a true nationalist leader in a colonial country where neither the Africans at home nor the leader himself was equipped with adequate funds for the promotion of education

of his fellow countrymen. It would mean inability to appreciate the problems of racial barricades placed in the way of a black leader in a white man's civilisation – Azikiwe could not have got me into the United States through Columbia or Harvard University. The scholarship would not have come to as many of us as the eight Nigerians at one time, nor could my fifty pounds per year be adequate to meet even partial expenses in those institutions, if I did not have to work.

In every history of a great social change, there is always a period of "half bread is better than none" which precedes a period of "all or nothing at all." Our Africa could not have bye-passed the sequence of events in that order of nature. And Azikiwe recognized the fact with adult realism while some of us whom he sponsored were dancing zestfully under youthful illusions. To this illusion I bade good-bye. I made my way into the rude world without counting any chickens. All I had with me was hope, faith and hardwork. I wilfully deafened my ears to the voice that urged me not to make a leap.

Like a chartered libertine I built my pathway through the morasses of social barriers, into the stupendous space of North America. I know of other fellow African students who went through the same path as I did, ambitiously and joyfully. But this spirit was not always prevalent among some of the African students who studied in America under Azikiwe or myself. Imperialism used some of them to provide blackmail propaganda for justification of the prolongation of colonial paternalism as opposed to hardwork, independence and initiative which may produce first class grind of African manhood, which only American work-study process encourages.

How the transition was made from a Lincoln Scholarship student to a registered under-graduate of the Ohio State University in the Mid-West; how I emerged from a shielded infant in a strange nation into a lonely and an unprotected wanderer in a democratic society, will be told in the next chapter.

Chapter Twelve

TRANSITION

Keep on going and the chances are that you will stumble on something, perhaps when you are least expecting it. I never heard of anyone stumbling on something sitting down.

– Charles F. Kettering.

While in Africa, I was told the story of one of my cousins called Ishmael Ndefo. He left Nigeria in about 1918 to the United States and never returned home. His brother in Nigeria gave me his American address as 425 Powel Street, Brooklyn. I was instructed to find Ishmael and report about his well-being. I was also told to persuade him to return to Nigeria.

During our 1939 Mid-Term Holidays, in the Winter, I decided to go to New York City to look for Ndefo. I had never been to New York City before, except when I landed from Nigeria and passed swiftly to Lincoln. I knew nobody there to welcome me. But some students, after failing to dissuade me from going, gave me Theresa Hotel address at 125th Street and 7th Avenue.

I tried to "hitch-hike," but got nowhere, so I joined a Greyhound Bus to New York City. I was directed to Fifth Avenue where I joined the No. 7 double-deck bus which dropped me in front of the Theresa Hotel in Harlem. My understanding was that I could get to 425 Powel Street as soon as I arrived at Theresa Hotel.

The junction of 7th Avenue and 125th Street was thickly crowded, people moving hard and fast, life was active and full. Cars joined each other behind from all directions in a continuous motion as if in a great royal procession.

There were green and red lights alternating signals to all drivers and pedestrians with mechanical precision and efficiency characteristic of America.

I was dazzled by the sight of beauty and vigor among the African-Americans. They exhibited various moods – lively, proud, hilarious, or serious. It was rather difficult to stop anyone in order to enquire about my cousin Ndefo and his 425 Powel Street. My Nigerian accent was clearly strange because no one appeared to understand me readily when I went into the Hotel Theresa asking about Ndefo. The name Powel Street sounded like somewhere in the moon. I was somewhat irritated and surprised that nobody in the Theresa Hotel counter seemed to know where Powel Street was located.

Confidently, I walked into the Street to look for the address. I decided to use my own intuition. From 125th Street I walked down to 110th Street along Seventh Avenue. I did not see Powel Street. I went Eastward to Lenox Avenue and walked along the 125th Street again. There was no Powel Street. I went Westward again through 135th Street. No sight of Powel Street. It was here that someone told me to go to the 135th Street Y.M.C.A. which was situated between Lenox and Seventh Avenues. People at the "Y" said they never heard about Powel Street. I asked about Mr. Ndefo. One man said: "What the hell is he talking about?"

I left the Y.M.C.A. despondently. I was getting hungry, coupled with fear that Ndefo and his 425 Powel Street might be a mere fiction. Could I face my Lincoln colleagues who advised me against the adventure? In the meantime a taxi cab stopped by and I enquired if I could be taken to Powel Street. The driver beckoned me into his cab, I jumped inside. I heard a cracking noise made by the driver in the front seat of the cab. Then something began to tick like a clock. But I paid no particular attention to it. It must be a part of my entertainment.

The driver turned to me and asked again "Where Sir?" I told him to take me to 425 Powel Street. Not knowing that Brooklyn is a different world from Manhattan, I did not tell the driver that Powel Street was in Brooklyn. The man started to drive me around

Manhattan, looking for Powel Street which we never saw. We had driven around a good while when he stopped another taxi driver to enquire where Powel Street was. The driver asked him if he had tried Brooklyn. Then he turned to me and asked: "Hei Fella, is your Powel Street in Brooklyn?" I answered "Yes." Without further ado we drove to 125th Street toward Broadway, and he drove into Riverside Drive from where we started a very long drive before we entered into Brooklyn Borough. All this time, what seemed to me to be a clock was steadily ticking in the front of the cab.

On our way, the taxi driver and I entered into conversation:

Driver: "You are a foreigner, Hei?"
Orizu : "I am from Africa."
Driver: "Africa!"
Orizu: "Yes."
Driver: "Where did you learn English?"
Orizu: "We have Schools in my Country."
Driver: "Who teach English there? – I guess the damn British teachers."
Orizu: "I was taught by African teachers."
Driver: "Oh yea! hów about those elephants and lions?"
Orizu: "Which elephants and lions?"
Driver: "I mean ... I mean ... Are n't you from Congo? – they have plenty wild animals."
Orizu: "I am from Nigeria, but I have never seen a lion or an elephant there."
Driver: "Oh yea, pardon me, Nigeria is on the bank of the Nile, near Suez, I guess?"
Orizu: "Nigeria is on the West Coast of Africa – but where is Powel Street?"
Driver: "Pardon me Sir, I am looking for it, we just come into Brooklyn. Never mind, we shall soon get over there."

He said this with apparent ease and courtesy. I began to marvel at American generosity. The taxi driver had been driving me for a long time now, he never stopped to ask me how much I would pay. He just picked me and started to drive along and he appeared

unmindful of his gasoline and time. He felt so much at home getting interested in me and discussing other matters. If it were in Lagos City of Nigeria, before a taxi driver would drive so indefinite a space, he must demand an affirmation of the price for his services. Besides, Lagos drivers would not have been so much at ease making the passenger feel good with interesting chats. With this back-ground, I thought I was getting the better of the bargain. And of course, my estimate of the cost for the taxi driver did not exceed twenty-five cents, considering that I had the impression that things were supposed to be cheap in America. Cars and gasoline were manufactured in America. I concluded therefore that I was in for a wonderful time. But the clock-like sound went on ticking heedlessly.

At last we arrived at 425 Powel Street. The driver jumped out and flashed a small torch light to find from the letter box if Ndefo was resident there. Ndefo's name was there.

Driver: "Yes-a-ree –, there you are," and he took his seat inside the cab and pushed the ticking machine, then it stopped ticking. He looked at it and looked at me.

Orizu: "Have we arrived?"

Driver: "Yea, and hurry please, I must go back to New York."

Orizu: "O, thank you very much. How much would you take? Here is ten cents." The driver looked at me and said nothing. So I decided that the money was too small. To impress him, I offered twenty five cents as my limit. He still said nothing. I felt slighted and started to get off the cab, and told him to take his twenty five cents or I go away.

Driver: "Look here Fella, I don't know what the hell with you. What do you think this is – a Santa Claus?" I did not know what a Santa Claus meant then.

Orizu: "I don't understand what you mean. If twenty five cents is not enough, tell me your price please."

Driver: "Look here Fella, – Where do you think you are, in Africa jungle?" Then I felt insulted.

Orizu: "I don't want any nonsense about Africa. I have plenty of money here. (All I had with me was four dollars) and whatever you want say so, but stop abusing Africa!"

Driver: "Can't you see the metre? What do you think you are doing – a free ride?" I knew nothing about the metre which was settling the price for my "ride" all along, while I thought it was a clock.

Orizu "I better go and call Mr. Ndefo to settle this for us. I cannot pay the seven dollars and sixty cents recorded by the metre."

Driver: "Don't you leave this cab Fella, give me the money first." Suddenly he pulled out a revolver. I became terrified. Confession followed.

Orizu: "Driver, please all I have is four dollars. You can have it, but please don't shoot me". By this time I remembered that in the cinema, Americans used guns freely and could shoot people easily for trivials.

Driver: "My friend don't waste my time. Give me the money. Can't you see the metre? Are you crazy?"

Orizu: "Please, I didn't know that it will cost plenty of money. Wait, let me get my cousin to pay you."

Driver: "Okey, give me that your brief case. Go and get your damned cousin." I quickly handed over my brief case to him and went for Ndefo.

I was no more thinking about whether Africa was insulted or not. I rushed to Ndefo's apartment door. I heard a man and a woman chattering hilariously. I quickly knocked at the door. They appeared not to care. I knocked harder. The man enquired "Who?" I did not give my name, but as if I was in Africa I said "It is me." He repeated in a commanding, impatient tone "You who?" Then I answered: "I am Christopher Orizu from Nigeria." The man said in a trembling voice: "Oh my brother comes, he is from Otolo!" The door was opened. As soon as he saw me he said: "He looks like *Nnanyi*.[1] O God, what shall I do?" The wife burst into tears and said: "Dave, is this your brother? '

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1 Nnanyi: refers to the OBI of Nnewi – my father. Nnanyi literally means "our father."

Before their emotion developed further, I told them about the taxi driver. Ndefo rushed down and paid him the rest of the money and returned my brief case. Mrs. Ndefo hugged me and wept for joy. She said she did not realize that her husband really had a family in Africa. My cousin laughed uneasily and finally shed tears. He asked me about some family members, some of whom I did not know because they died long ago.

I myself was stunned. It looked unbelievable to me that this was a son of Ezeikeora of the noble Ezeagha family of the Royal Nnerue House in Nnewi. How could so noble a son so forget his native land and his people for those twenty years? What spark of abandon, what intriguing social wine could have intoxicated him enough as to forgo a great heritage? So far, I had seen nothing in America for which I could exchange my Africa and my people.

Ndefo was an illiterate practically. His opulent wife from Savannah Georgia was an illiterate. They drank heavily. They lived under hallucinations. On the table I saw a bottle of gin, a bottle of brandy, four bottles of beer and other empty bottles already consumed. The apartment was clean, sparsely furnished, but satisfactory. The Ndefos looked healthy and thoroughly satisfied within their own world. No children.

I was served with the drinks. I declined. I asked for food which was quickly served. I had broiled fish, potatoes, spinach and milk. The radio was on giving music. I found Ndefo to be a good dancer, but in Nigerian style, – single! It appeared as if the memories of the past were stirred in his brain, moving him, in spite of his joy, well nigh to recrimination. He was endowed with frank, child-like face, sweet eyes, sparkling teeth and bright personality. A short fellow with a good heart, humorous laughter, affectionate feeling and sudden spells of abandonment and resignation.

As soon as I finished my dinner, I relaxed in a chair, watching the Ndefos in their jolly mood. I felt so happy that in the far off America, I found someone of my own blood. There was a mingled feeling between my secret indictment of Ndefo for his long stay in America, and my joy for having found him. I slept soundly.

The next morning Mrs. Ndefo left for her job. Ndefo himself had a small fish store where he sold fresh fish daily. Because of my visit, he closed the fish store for the day. Now that we were alone, we spoke in Ibo language. He showed me where he stored some Nigerian food stuffs such as garri, palm oil, hot pepper. He got them from sea men. Then he taught me how to make foo foo, soup, and stew out of American ingredients.

There are different types of foo foo stew. One of them is composed of bitter leaves (*Onugbu*), palm oil, pepper, salt, onions, yam or coco-yam thickner, egusi, fish and or meat. They are cooked together in a pot. The foo foo is made of pounded yam, corn-flour, or coco-yam and so forth. The foo foo and stew are served on different plates, but are eaten together, by dipping small balls of the foo foo into the stew before eating. Generally, the foo foo is not chewed. It is swallowed outright as it enters the mouth. The extra-ordinary flavour and slippery nature of the stew enables the digestive apparatus to draw the delicious foo foo into the oesophagus without further ado in the mouth. I have never eaten any other type of foo foo in Africa or in any other country of the world I have travelled which approximates a well prepared foo foo dinner in its completeness, delicacy and digestibility, if taken moderately and with sufficient and appropriate soup.

America is a wonderful place. We got almost all the substitutes for African ingredients for the foo foo dinner. Ndefo was my tutor in that "Chemistry." For yam we got Aunt Jemima Pancake Mix and Farina. For bitter leaves we got spinach. Olive oil took the place of the palm oil. The only thing totally unavailable was egusi. Later I discovered that a well ground tuna fish gives the effect of egusi in the stew.

At the end of three days, I left Brooklyn for Lincoln. The mid term holidays had ended. For the benefit of my African colleagues at Lincoln, I carried plenty of dry garri along with a well prepared okro soup. I wanted not only for them to enjoy what I had enjoyed, but to be convinced that I had met my cousin indeed.

On my arrival at the campus I summoned all the African students for the foo foo festival. We gathered at the University kitchen where

we borrowed some pots to warm the soup, and to boil water to make the garri. Come and see H. A. B. Jones Quartey of Ghana conducting his fragile fingers on the hot garri, or where Fitz John of Sierra Leone was amusing himself with the scramble. Come and see Kwame Nkrumah and Ozuomba Mbadiwe fighting a losing battle with the slippery okro soup which could not be controlled too easily from the dish to the mouth. I remember how Etuka Okala and Mbonu Ojike pushed me away in order to have my own share of the booty, saying that I had had enough in Brooklyn. I remember how Okechukwu Ikejiani and Nnodu Okongwu had the privilege, being the youngest among us, of consuming the last portion of the foo foo and okro. What a fun we provided for American students who watched us eat with our fingers. I was sorry for them for what they had missed.

At the end of this "festival," I told them the story of taxi driver and the gun. Some laughed. Some were frightened. But as I thought the whole thing over, I came to realize that after all, the glorious New York City was not made of streets where gold were thrown around as a football. If money was so easily obtained, there would have been no reason for anyone to use a gun to collect a sum of seven dollars and sixty cents. I could not imagine any sane person in my country using a gun to collect money from a debtor – much more from a stranger. It was frightening to contemplate. Then I said to myself that "perhaps this is the spirit of materialism or capitalism – whatever you call it." I was somewhat confused in my idea of civilization. I did not relate this story to my family at home because I was afraid they might think that the country where I came to have my education was barbarous which it really was not on the whole.

I resumed my studies at Lincoln unaffected. Then came the end of the first semester. Every student was looking for a summer job. For us the Africans the problem was acute. We knew no place to go or how to find a job in other cities. I considered myself most privileged because I had somewhere to go. I planned to go to my cousin in Brooklyn. My room mate Ojike had no place to go. I found it difficult to leave him behind. At a great risk, I invited him

to Ndefo's apartment in Brooklyn. I say at a great risk because I was unsure of my own accommodation and feeding when I added yet another.

Ndefo's apartment contained only one bed-room for him and his wife, a small sitting room and a kitchenette which served as a dinning room as well. Ojike and I used the sitting room for everything. There we kept our suitcases; there we slept on the chairs at night; there visitors were entertained. It was rent free. And we were also fed free for several weeks before Ojike got a job and left. Ndefo employed me in his fish store across the street. There I learned how to sell fresh fish. I learnt the names of different types of fish, their prices, and how to weigh them. The job of cleaning the fish for the customers was not so pleasant, but I learned to enjoy it. I was not paid a fixed wage. Ndefo simply used to give me about ten cents for my car fare to New York any day I planned to visit New York. My wages was my rent and feeding. I had plenty of food and fresh fish to eat.

Ndefo soon discovered that I was becoming a liability to him because when some customers came to buy fish, they enjoyed my telling them about Africa. One heard and told another, until the fish store was turning into a lecture hall, while the fish remained unsold. Ndefo warned that he would "fire" me if I continued that way. But the people's interest increased, and I was "fired." Mrs. Ndefo pleaded for me. I was re-engaged.

Having known the Ndefos more intimately, I decided to jump into the real campaign for which I came to their house to get my cousin interested in returning to Africa. Ndefo and I had to discuss this matter in his wife's absence. "She will murder me," Ndefo said, "if she knows I wanted to go home!" I was baffled about that, and I began to lose interest in my cousin's wife. But I had to be cautious. American women own the home, and unless I pleased the wife, I was sure to find myself on the street the next morning. As the matter took a serious turn, however, I felt I must tell the wife. She felt furious and mad. That night I was told where to stop. My things were thrown out, and I had to sleep in the open roof of their building without any covering till morning. That was the end

of my job and security in my maiden summer venture to New York City.

The new era of wandering opened in my life. No more free foo foo. No more free room. I felt lost in a world of strange and fast culture. The emptiness of human love, the selfish, base cruelty of women; the deliberate suppression of what is right, oppressed me. Why will Mrs. Ndefo prove so impossible against the right of her husband to remain an African and to return once more to his home – sweet home? Is it fair for Ndefo to buy the love of a woman at the price of his heritage? Where is the dignity of that marriage?

I knew one Mr. and Mrs. Nurse who lived across the street from us. I went to their home for advise. Mr. Nurse gave me the address of the Carlton Avenue Y.M.C.A. in Brooklyn. He told me that I could go there and seek for a job. I packed to Carlton Avenue "Y". The Executive Secretary there was a kind person. After listening to my story, he told me that there was no immediate job for me, but that he would help me for a week before I got a job to pay for my rent and food.

I was given a free lodging and food to last for one week only. On the fourth day, I still had no job. The next evening I decided to write home to Nigeria for funds. One of the letters was to Azikiwe. I used the code words we decided upon to describe my financial crisis. I took the letters down to drop in the letter box on Carlton Avenue as directed by a friend. Instead of going to the letter box, I went straight to a fire alarm box painted red. In trying to find a hole through which to drop the letter, I pushed something there back and forth, not knowing that I had signalled the Fire Brigade to proceed to Carlton Avenue. Without any concern I walked away and found the real letter box and dropped the mail, and started strolling and thinking of my fate and the fate of those letters in terms of my finance.

Suddenly, I heard some disquietening noise that sounded as if there was a commotion of wave and thunder and rain. Amid the thunderous roar, bells were ringing in a desperate tempo and fast rhythm – all coming with increasing noise and speed toward Carlton Avenue. I looked on with curiosity and anxiety. Then I saw behind

me a squad of ladder-laden fire engines in red color. Standing on the roofless vehicle were tall, iron-helmeted men wearing what looked like tropical rain boots, some holding heavy water hose in their hands. They were geared as if marching to war. I watched them as they jumped down around the Y.M.C.A. and demanded to know where the fire was on. It was all alarm and frenzy. Then I heard some by-standers say:

"False alarm!" then another added: "I wonder who the hell touched that damn thing", pointing to the red box I pushed up and down before finding the correct letter box. All at once it dawned on me that I was responsible for the coming of those warlike monsters – for so those fire brigade squad looked to me at that time.

Frightened and bewildered, I took to my heels. I ran into the Y.M.C.A. and made straight to my room. I did not come out again for the entire evening. When it was dinner time, a friend knocked at my door inviting me to join him. I thought that they had discovered me. I told him I wanted no food that night. That was how I missed my dinner. In the morning, I went to the Executive Secretary to confess my sin. I told him that I mistook the fire alarm box for a postal box. He got disturbed and said: "You must get out of here tomorrow morning." He told me that if I were reported to state officials, I would cause trouble for the "Y".

Again, my boat floundered. I had to swim from the storms of Brooklyn social sea to the unknown shores of Manhattan or Bronx, or trek back to the suburbs of Chester County where Lincoln University sat immobile and unperturbed.

I remembered 135th Street Y.M.C.A. in Manhattan.. Henry Kraft, the Secretary there had known about me. I went to him. I told him what happened at the Carlton Avenue Y.M.C.A. He telephoned them and was rather amused than annoyed. He said that I did it out of innocence, and must not be penalized for it. He was quite willing to cooperate with me. He gave me two letters of introduction. One to Dr. Max Yergan, the other to Dr. Jessie Jones. Yergan was the Executive Secretary of Council on African Affairs. I went to him first. Miss Freider Negbuer was his Secretary. She introduced me to Dr. Yergan.

Council on African Affairs was interested in the progress of Africa as a whole. And Yergan was a man of warm sympathy, affection and faith. His eyes were frank and fearless Intellectually inclined, he lived on a plane of a crusader – militant, idealistic, self-opinionated. He discussed racial questions with the bitterness of his South African experience when he was a Y.M.C.A. officer there. But he talked about Africa with such sweeping generalization that baffled my reasoning on specific cases. I was not however worried about the accuracy of his conclusions. My interest then was more personal than general. I wanted to be relieved from the bondage of want. I needed food and shelter. I needed protection, I wanted education.

Yergan arranged for my luncheon which I enjoyed with Miss Negbuer.

He also gave me an additional sum of two dollars and fifty cents for my dinner. The Council was not a job-getting organization, and there was no funds for Nigerian Students at that time. During the luncheon, Miss Negbuer, whom I learnt to call just Freider, told me about Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Smith whom she thought would like to meet me. She would talk to them first.

After the luncheon, I made my way to the office of Dr. Jessie Jones of the Phelps-Stokes Foundation, at 101 Park Avenue. It was an imposing building with a gigantic elevator by which I flew to Dr. Jones Office floor.

Dr. Jones was an amiable, paternally disposed old man. He was a Welsh immigrant who became a naturalized American. He enquired into my educational plans. I told him that my field of study was Political Economy. He paused for a while and then reached for a book in his shelf there. He handed the book to me and it was "AGGREY OF AFRICA." I told him I have read it. Then he said: "Youngman, you should follow the way of Aggrey. He was a wonderful fellow. Africa can never regain the loss she sustained by Aggrey's death." I told him that I chose the field of political economy according to my arrangement with Nnamdi Azikiwe because I preferred to study Political Government.

Dr. Jones blushed his face and spoke with a certain amount of seriousness which I never expected at our first meeting: "Africans

should study only Rural Agriculture, Education and Religion. It is wrong for a youngman like you to dabble into political studies and commerce or science. Such education is bad and evil for Africa. Azikiwe is a very bad example. He is messing things up in West Africa right now." Before I spoke a word, he rose up from his chair and went to the window facing down town New York. He beckoned me and said: "Look out there" pointing to the skycrappers around; "Do you mean to tell me that these ugly things of our civilization is what you wish to import into a quiet and religious Africa?" I made no reply yet when he piously exclaimed: "O, my son, no! our civilization has failed. It is all evil. These machines and tall buildings will destroy African morality."

I pointed out that we were called bushmen in Africa because we lacked such buildings there. "How", I asked, "could Africa be considered civilized in your own terms if we refused these signs of material progress?" Dr. Jones looked at me with disgust and said: "You seem to be one of those boys whom Mr. Azikiwe has led astray. Mr. Roy, my secretary shall tell you that we have no funds for boys like you over here." I looked at him puzzled and unrepentant. Puzzled because I failed to understand his logic; unrepentant because I was not convinced of what he was talking about civilization and Azikiwe. I simply left his office gracefully and disappointed. I inserted in my note book "Don't forget Dr. Jones, a European imperialist in the guise of an American in Park Avenue, New York."

I returned to the 135th Street Y.M.C.A. to tell Craft the results of my visits to Yergan and Jones. Craft was not daunted. He gave me a room at the "Y" annex across the street and permitted me to have my meals there until some plan was made for a job. I called Miss Negbuer on the telephone as we arranged, and she told me that Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Smith would like to have me for dinner at their house at 110 Haven Avenue any day convenient for me that week. With some air of empty bluff, I started to hesitate as if I had anything else to do than to accept the invitation quickly in the nearest possible time. Then I said: "Well, tomorrow night will be alright, I am free then," as if I shall not be free any other time!

It is a wise attitude to "beware of a sudden friendship or slow enmity", but my sudden friendship with the Smiths after the dinner the next night never gave way to the merciless influences of space and time. It started like a burst of flame and remained burning for ever. As I entered into their apartment that evening, I felt the unseen presence of a vivifying current of a positive life beneath. Mrs. Smith was a personality by herself – potent, blazing, reminiscent, humorous, tender, thoughtful. Mr. Smith represented a sedate, cautious, informed, liberal Englishman. He smiled with rememberable expression in his face which betrayed benevolence, conviction and humanity.

We had dinner as if we were old friends. Miss Negbuer was there. It was informal. And that was what I liked. We talked about Africa. Their greatest interest was to know about my personal ambition, my attitude toward the British, and the whole idea of imperialism. I liked the British idea of aristocracy under democracy. I wanted Independent Africa. Mrs. Smith whose father was a gold miner in South Africa condemned racial bigotry of her own country of origin. She was white but she abhorred the horrors of racialism in South Africa. Her husband supported African freedom.

Miss Negbuer was a shrewd lady. She deliberately gave me the opportunity to do most of the talking with Smiths, and when she was satisfied that they liked my ideas and plans, and just at the close of the evening, she introduced the fact that I was unable to get funds from home because of war, and that no home government was out to help. She thought that perhaps the Smiths would be useful to me while spending my summer in New York before getting back to school. It worked. They at once guaranteed to help me with ten dollars a week.

K. .O. Mbadiwe was in New York this time for his summer holidays. Originally, he was financially better situated than myself. He came to the United States with a substantial sum both personally and from his sponsor. Then he had funds coming from home at that initial stage. He did not enjoy the state of sufficiency too long. As the summer progressed his funds thinned out. And finally it was completely out. Ojike did not appear to be doing so well either.

He was always on some odd job or odd secretaryship but nothing so promising accrued. We three came together once more. Hunger for food, search for shelter and appetite for home brought us into common characteristics which were: our reaction to difficult situation, our love for our country which superseded all other considerations, our superfluous pride for Africa, our readiness to own her with fanatical confidence, no matter the weight of scorn and ridicule by the more "civilized" society in which we found ourselves. Slowly, the cobweb of personal admiration we had for each other developed into an iron-chain of friendship. Patriotism was the link which fused that chain.

I told them my own story about the Ndefos down to the present. While Ojike was away on his odd jobs, Mbadiwe and I devised some means whereby we could live on about five cents a day. We lived on cornflakes and milk and doughnuts or hot-dogs. Our greatest luxury was a small bottle of pepsi cola which we had at intervals. And yet, other African students considered Mbadiwe, Ojike and me the most fortunate and comfortable. The secret, however, was that we kept our troubles to ourselves, and never exposed our difficulties except to those who could help us. It is an unwise and fruitless habit to tell anyone of your problems – asking his sympathy – when you know he cannot help you. Better carry your burden cheerfully. Cut your coat according to your size. Work hard, wait.

On this basis, I was able to drag my life on with ten dollars a week from the Smiths. I paid four dollars weekly for my cheap room at the "Y" Annex on 135th Street. I used three dollars for transport, laundry and so forth. The balance of three dollars went to my feeding. That was living under tension – on the verge of starvation. But then, man does not live by bread alone. Good spirits, hopes and faith can carry the weakness of the flesh far. Will is a powerful propeller when life dashes on a slippery ground.

I kept on looking for the types of job I saw advertised in the press. In the meantime, I decided to visit the Ndefos in Brooklyn once more. I took Mbadiwe with me on several occasions. Now that I had learned my lesson, I avoided any discussion about Ndefo going back to Africa. Mrs. Ndefo was therefore willing to let

Mbadiwe and I prepare our foo foo dinner as often as we wished. At the end of each trip, we returned late in the night to Manhattan.

Although the immediate problem of mere existence during the summer was a great concern to us, but there was another question which was of more consequence to me. As the summer vacation was coming to a close, I began to reflect on my own college education. I was already satisfied that the courses of study at Lincoln University would not do for me. Dr. Bunche of Howard University had already promised to help me register with Howard University with some scholarship grant in his Department of Political Science. I was now eager to register with Howard during the fall term.

I sent a telegram to Dr. Bunche from New York to ascertain the limits of the scholarship. He replied promptly confirming tuition scholarship only. Howard was more expensive than Lincoln, and I had no funds whatsoever to pay for my room, board, books, laboratory fees and incidentals in Washington. Azikiwe did not give any reply to my code letter and cablegram, nor did any other person from Nigeria respond favourably. My cousin Ndefo was in no position to help, though he was sympathetic.

There was one Mr. Jacobs in Brooklyn who became my friend as a result of my conversation with him during the time I was a freshfish seller for Ndefo. Mr. Jacobs was the president of the Brooklyn branch of the Universal Negro Improvement Association of Marcus Garvey. I told him my plight. He at once arranged for me to give a lecture before his group and appeal for fund. That was my first appearance before an audience in America.

There on the platform with me was another guest from Cleveland, Ohio. He was James R. Stewart whom they claimed was the St. Peter among the disciples of Garvey. The U.N.I.A. members were zealots without ammunition. With all their love for Africa, they were too poor to help neither themselves nor Africa herself. Only fifteen dollars was raised for me that night.

Later, Mr. Jacobs took me to the home of a lady from the West Indies – Miss Charlotte Adelmond. She expressed great love for Africa, and offered to give me a loan of one hundred dollars to enable me make a start at Howard. Under the circumstances, that

amount represented a lot of money, but it was too small for a minimum start at Howard, without a clear indication as from where another fund would come.

As I was groping in the dark, the summer vacation of 1939 ended. Gloomily, undecidedly, I left New York for Lincoln. There I found it impossible to continue dilly-dallying over such courses of study unrelated to my temperament and profession. Against the advice and permission of some African students and college professors, I left Lincoln. I had previously informed Dr. Bunche from Brooklyn to expect me at the opening of the term. Although I knew that there was not enough funds, I was hoping that perhaps, on my arrival there, arrangements could be made for me to work for my other expenses.

I joined a Grey Hound Bus to Washington, D.C. I stopped at Dr. Bunche's house. His lovely wife and charming children welcomed me warmly. I was directed to the University Campus. I had not even registered when I was told to attend the Chapel where the President Dr. Mordeccai Johnson addressed the Freshman Class. Dr. Johnson was a spirited orator – breezy, compelling, and intellectually passionate.

I was dazed with numberless varieties of beautiful Negro girls springing smartly and innocently, carrying themselves with confident air and assurance. They seemed to feel that college life had meaning and that their future was pregnant with possibilities. The boys gave the same impression with smiles and readiness of a budding generation. Looking at those young men and women, coupled with spaciousness and magnificence of the campus and the buildings, I felt grateful to Dr. Bunche for inviting me to Howard. But events soon proved that I was not destined to enjoy the atmosphere I so much loved.

Just as I went in for registration, facts came out that apart from the tuition scholarship granted me, I had not enough funds to take care of myself. I made no previous arrangements for my lodging, and there was no room for me in the dormitory. Dr. Bunche could not help beyond the tuition at that time. He told me that he wished he could. He also expected me to have come with sufficient funds for other expenses at least for the first term. He was right. The

amount from Brooklyn, part of which I had already used for travelling, was dismally insignificant. While I was contemplating on how to raise funds to make up for my expenses, I had to go and complete my registration. In the process, I met the dean of admissions who was an African-American. I presented to him my available credentials which he accepted. He then demanded my Cambridge School Certificate from Fngland. He made it clear to me that without the Cambridge School Certificate, my other credentials of African origin were not valid. I could not follow his reasoning but all the same, I produced my Cambridge Certificate for scrutiny. After this, he said that I was admitted. I could not understand how this learned blackman should attach such importance to this Cambridge Certificate above all other documents. Why should a black man adopt such a procolonial attitude to the education of black men? I saw immediately that I could not put up with such a dean. The atmosphere would not be conducive for me as it was totally against my mood and my whole attitude towards imperialism and the suppression of the black race. This psychology coupled with my difficulty in getting more funds, made me renounce the scholarship.

No amount of pleading and persuasion from Dr. Bunche and his children could make me change my mind. With utmost distress I returned to Lincoln University. It was a painful retreat for me.

On arrival at Lincoln, I experienced an open ridicule and scorn from my African colleagues. I had three loads and not one of the colleagues was willing to help me carry them to my hall. I had to drag the heaviest trunk of all to the third floor of my Hall alone. The African students were furiously angry with me. They felt that I was crazy trying to run around the country. They were most happy that I had met my waterloo at Howard. They were right. I trusted fate too much. I ought to have been better equipped before venturing out. But I was not overcome. I was rather secretly resolved to do something to prove to my colleagues that I was not all that naive. Through consistent advice and guidance of Mr. Wilson, I decided to go to the Ohio State University. Dr. Wilson himself undertook to write my cousin Chief J. C. Ulasi, impressing him of the urgency and necessity of my transferring to the Ohio State University. and the

need for his financial help. I had previously written home without any response. Dr. Wilson's letter did not receive an encouraging reply.

A period of frustration and irritation came in my Lincoln life. Nothing around pleased me any more. My idea of life was purposeful, and since I had realized that I was not pursuing the right courses of study because of the limited opportunities at Lincoln, my efforts appeared to me as purposeless and I could not be reconciled to it.

Besides, I felt that I had missed several important things at Howard. I missed Dr. Ralph Bunche, I loved the man for his own sake. I loved his intellectual liberalism and natural sympathy for people. He had the makings of a lion, and his piercing eyes looked to me like that of an old sage, though he was comparatively young. To study under him would have been a matter of special privilege for me, and his lovely family would have been my adopted relatives, while in Washington. I missed Dr. Mordaccai Johnson. He was dynamic and full of personality.

Apart from being an orator, he had the makings of Dr. Conant of Harvard or Dr. Hutchins of the University of Chicago. Both persons were neither here nor there – always full-scheduled, compact, one-directional, decisive and rather somewhat eccentric. These qualities attract me to people. I missed the young students – the energetic beauties of the nation who congregated at Howard University which was the best black university in United States. I missed their free company and comradeship which would have given me a totally different background in my educational and cultural outlook in American life. I missed Dr. Allain Lock: the American philosopher-king with whom I would have ascended into his ivory tower more often than I did when we later became intimate friends. Then I missed Washington D.C. the capital of the nation. I missed the awe of the White House and some imposing monuments and the Capitol Hill. I missed the ever crowded Penn Station with well arranged circuitous taxi stands; I missed the Carver Building and the Freedom Hospital both of which reminded me of the effort of the White Americans to soothe the conscience of the capital of a great democratic nation where Jimcrowism flourished in spite of the spirit of liberty which brought the founding fathers there.

While contemplating vainly upon the things I had missed, I was planning heedlessly for a new adventure. At last I decided on the Ohio State University. It was a secret known only to Dean Wilson, Ojike and myself. I must stress here that before embarking upon going to Columbus, Ohio, I knew to what possible dangers I was exposing myself, both from the point of view of my sponsors in Africa, and to the strangeness of the mid west.

To understand my attitude, one has to know that throughout my struggle for higher education even from Africa, it had never occurred to me to blame anyone for many disappointments and difficulties I went through. For some strange reasons I felt that my destiny was in God's hand, all that others could do was to play a part ordered by that God. When they failed to fulfil their promises, I felt it a mere transitional trial of my endurance, or an exercise for me to learn how to overcome obstacles without rancour.

I wrote to the Ohio State University Registrar for admission. Not waiting to get a reply, I left Lincoln University back to New York City from where I hoped to travel to Columbus. I went to the 135th Street Y.M.C.A. and told Mr. Craft about my own plan. He was afraid I was going to have "a tough time over there," but he would not discourage me because he thought I could "make it." He gave me a letter of introduction to the Executive Secretary of the Spring Street Y.M.C.A. in Columbus, Mr. Daniel B. Marsh, and advised me: "You stick to the "Y" when you get over there. They will help you".

I visited Marx Yergan of the Council of African Affairs, and he was happy I had decided to proceed to the Ohio State. I had a long discussion with the Smiths in their Haven Avenue home once more. They promised to help me some more in the future when I got to Columbus but not in a regular manner as they did in the past summer. I could remember significantly the look of anxiety in the face of Mr. Smith. It was only a few weeks ago – on September 1, 1939 – that Hitler invaded Poland. The lid was removed from the international seething pot, and the World War II had begun. Our discussion centered on this European war. Everywhere in America people talked about Hitler and England. People blamed

Neville Chamberlain for his compromises with Hitler. But America – the populace – was not yet aroused to feel the war as their own. To the man in the street, it was yet a European affair. But the Smiths were British by birth and sentiment. In their home, I felt the deep shock and apprehension about the war.

I had several days to stay in New York City before I left for Columbus. During those days, I had time to look at this city of wonder and radiance; to listen to people talk about the war; to watch the free Americans go about their business; to see their lives flow like a stream over a pebbled bed of society – with turmoil, half-romantic, half-serious, always propelling, jumping fast and steadily as if stubborn and yet gay and fascinating.

The difference between New York and Lagos which I left behind was like day and night. There was nothing to compare. My education began here and not necessarily in the university. Buildings, such as the Empire State was incredible, representing the genius of the twentieth century engineering, while we in Africa still consider a grass roof a permanent edifice!

In Brooklyn library, I read something about the American founding fathers. There I learnt how America was built by resolute patriots who waged wars with the British Parliament. I followed carefully the painful experience those men went through before American Independence was declared. Nothing pushed my ambition into the wild for action as the inspirational wordings of that "Declaration" of American Independence. The force of words, the symmetry of language, the universality of the ideas expressed, the noble nature of the ideals embodied, the undying quality of the conclusions drawn, the vision of the framers when they called upon the "candid world," to hearken to their cry and reason "that all men are created equal" – these strengthened my conviction that the battle for African Independence shall receive sanction in American history, and that if America could emerge from colonial status into such a fabulous nation, then Africa has every reason to believe in her great destiny. A great transition had come into my life. Fears and inhibitions were gone. I had no one else but God to trust. I must proceed to the Ohio State University whether winning or losing.

Chapter Thirteen

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

The whole United States flows through Ohio; the Buckeye State gives you an almost perfect sense of what the country is as a whole. The State motto was once 'an empire within an empire' and Ohio prides itself greatly on its self-sufficiency.
– John Gunther.

The journey started from the Pennsylvania Railroad Station in New York City. With me was a letter of introduction from Henry Craft to Daniel B. Marsh of the Spring Street Y.M.C.A., Columbus. As our train left New York City through the tunnel, I began to think over my venture to Ohio State. I asked myself: "Why must I go to the Ohio State University?"

I wanted to register with the Ohio State University (O.S.U.) because its curricula contained the maximum courses which I needed in the minimum time I had to stay in the United States. My original assignment from Nigeria was to obtain my B.Sc. degree in Commerce. In the Ohio State a student had the opportunity of taking combination courses leading to B.Sc. degree in Business Administration and LLD. degree in five years of concentrated studies. I wanted this combination. That was not all. I had a burning and irresistible desire to get away from other African students at that stage of my academic career. There was too much emphasis on Africanism at a time when what we needed was a complete exposure to American life and culture, to college tradition and discipline in order that through a temporary self-forgetfulness, we could understand other people's mind and sources of their strength in order to strengthen Africa.

On arrival at the Columbus Union Station, I got a "green cab" to the Spring Street Y.M.C.A. where I handed Craft's letter to the Executive Secretary, Daniel Marsh. Mr. Marsh welcomed me with a great enthusiasm. His glance at me had eloquence greater than a thousand words. His voice possessed such a strong tone of confidence that persuaded me to develop an instantaneous faith in the possibilities ahead of me in that strange land among strange people.

In a moment I told Mr. Marsh my own story – a story of poverty and determination, of a will to dare in a desperate situation. There was I with all the world of good intention, but without any sinews of war for the battle I set for myself. I was not officially invited by the Ohio State University before coming to Columbus. I had no money for my room rent, school fees, feeding, clothing, books, transport to school and for other personal cares. "I only came to Columbus," I told Mr. Marsh, "just as Christopher Columbus came to America – by accident of fate, hoping that someone somehow by God's design shall understand and give me a helping hand to get along to my desired goal."

Mr. Marsh reflected splendid lustre of tenderness in his face. If he had any misgivings about my dare-devilry, he did not show it. Rather, he went on to say: "I think we may be able to help you O-O-Orizee." I corrected his pronunciation of my name from "Orizee" to "Orizu". We smiled at each other. This time I was sitting on a chair in his office while he telephoned to the Ohio State University and told me thereafter that he would drive me to the campus for registration in a moment. In the meantime he gave me a room to settle my things and to get ready to go to the university campus which was about six miles away from the Y.M.C.A.

With my credentials and passport I joined Mr. Marsh in his huge, black Buick car to the University. We entered into the mighty campus which had impressive buildings all around. He stopped in front of the Administration Building, and went to the Admissions Section. There were too many ladies around. Lady Deans, Lady Secretaries, Lady Registrars – every where ladies – some serious, some whimsical, some gay while all were consistently smart and fast.

They checked up their files and said that they did not forward any letter of admission to me, why then did I come? I told them that I wrote from Lincoln University that I desired admission and that I was coming. They looked amused, and told me that a student does not admit himself into the college. He applies for admission and waits for an official acceptance of his application. I admitted my error but requested that I be given a trial. They looked over my credentials including my passport. The fact that I came all the way from Africa seemed to have fascinated them, and it appeared that I was going to be admitted. Mr. Marsh and I waited patiently until after about half an hour during which time they removed my documents from me and went away to where I knew not. Then a young lady in her twenties emerged with a smiling face and told me that I could now register with the College of Liberal Arts or with the Department of Economics as I desired.

Mr. Marsh drove me back to the Y.M.C.A. with a feeling of triumph. He told me that he was all the time afraid that I might not be admitted during that term since I had no admission before hand. But now that I had been admitted, he would endeavour to get me properly adjusted inorder to meet my various financial obligations.

The university admission was settled, but I faced a more terrible question: how to feed, shelter, clothe, and maintain myself in Columbus. The first person I turned to was Mr. Marsh. I told him that I was expecting money from Nigeria anytime, but added frankly that the war conditions were such that no one could tell when the money would come. We must therefore plan as if there was nothing in sight from my home. I emphasized my readiness to work anywhere, anytime, inorder to raise the fund. Presenting the war situation was simply an alibi. Past experience made me not to rely on any money coming from home but I would not let Mr. Marsh or anybody else know this.

The first job I got was offered to me by Mr. Marsh himself at the Y.M.C.A. I was employed as a desk-clerk from 10.30 p.m. to 12.30 a.m. from Monday to Friday, and on Saturdays and Sundays, from 6.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. This job involved answering all the

telephone calls to the "Y", taking records of messages to all the guests and permanent lodgers and the "Y" officials, and delivering those massages. The desk-clerk accepted new guests and payment of rents from departed ones. It was his function to take care of the "Y" during the time he was at the desk. On week-ends, when "Y" members generally held dances, the desk-clerk collected from each couple their overcoats, hats, mufflers and hand gloves, hung them away carefully and orderly on appropriate hangers, and returned them to their respective owners at the end of the dance. The same thing held true of young "Y" club members who came every day in groups for swimming, badminton, and other in-door games. He had other petty responsibilities such as replacing fresh bottles of Pepsi-cola or Coca-cola in the slot-machine when visitors exhausted the bottles already there. No lodger could get into his room unless he received his key from the clerk. The job enabled me to earn enough money to pay for my room rent at the "Y".

I had some difficulties in keeping the job. The most prominent being the answering of the telephone. My accent was against me. As soon as someone heard me over the telephone, particularly for the first time, he would say something like this "For God's sake who is this?" and there must be some long explanation and repetition of words before he understood me and vice versa. Americans were too fast to tolerate much delays whenever they called on the telephone. Some Columbus citizens even protested to Daniel Marsh to remove "that African boy there messing up things". Mr. Marsh was too fond of me to be persuaded, rather he pointed out to me that I had to improve on my accent, and be more courteous when talking to people. "You'll be alright after a while," he concluded.

But that "accent" handicap turned to be a stepping stone in my Columbus life. For although some resented it, but a far greater number showed excitement and admiration. A good many of the people rushed to the "Y" to see an African for the first time. Young girls swooned around when they came in groups and singles to see the "kid" from Africa. After a short while, I found myself a popular person in Columbus as a whole. My accent improved just as I

succeeded in understanding the peoples' accent. Individuals invited me to their homes for "a bite" or for dinner as the case may be.

Mr. Marsh got in touch with one A. D. Gaither of the Regional Headquarters of the National Youths Administration – part of the Roosevelt's New Deal for the youths. Mr. Marsh wanted Mr. Gaither to get me some employment. I went to Mr. Gaither's office. Mr Gaither was a polite gentleman. He had a talk with me and gave me an appointment to come to his residence at 251 North 20th Street the next evening.

On arriving at Gaither's residence, I discovered that I was in for a dinner. After the dinner, Mr. Gaither asked me to tell my own story and my needs before his wife, Dorothy. At the end of my story, Mrs. Gaither asked me: "Do you like our dinner"? I said "Yes". She said: "Well, you can join us every evening to have your dinner if that would help." For my dinner I had something to do for the Gaithers. I had to wash, rinse, and put away all dinner dishes every evening after dinner. Every morning before going to school, I had to put coal in the furnace down the celler. Every Saturday afternoon, I had to mop the floor there and wash the windows.

I now had two jobs one at the "Y" for the payment of my rent, and the other at the Gaither's for my dinner. There remained my breakfast, lunch, school fees, clothing and bus fare to the college. Mr. Gaither went further. He introduced me to one Mr. George Berry, the owner of the Cheserpeak Restaurant on the East Long Street near Garfield Avenue, opposite Lincoln Theatre. Mr. Berry was a clever thinker and had Africa at heart. He told Mr. Gaither that although he had no need for an employee then, but he would employ me as dish washer, one hour every day just to help me take my breakfast there every morning before going to school. That was my third job which took care of my breakfast.

Mr. Gaither said that he would not rest until he "fixed" me properly, so that I could carry on my studies without much worry. He took me in his car to another man Mr. James L. Joyner, the owner of the Belmont Club on the East Long Street. Like Messrs Marsh, Gaither, and Berry, he loved everything African. Although

there was no previous engagement, but he insisted that we have dinner in his club with him. He gave an order for three plates of steak dinner with sweet potatoes, sliced tomatoes and lettuce (with French mayonnaise on them). He asked me many curious questions about Africa and its people. He was genuinely surprised at my spirit of adventure into the Ohio State, leaving all the Eastern Universities behind. He thereby promised to contribute something to my educational expenses. He told me to see him the next morning. When I came, he gave me fifty dollars for my clothing so that "you don't catch cold around here."

Ohio State was quite cold during winter. I was poorly clad on arrival. I needed at least one good overcoat, two good suits, woolen underwears, good shirts, solid shoes, gloves, ear-mufflers, scarf, woolen socks, a hat, in order to survive. Snow covered the streets. Coming from a tropical country, I had a greater need to be urgently well-clad. The fifty dollars from Joyner was not enough, but it offered a good beginning. Before I left Mr. Joyner, I enquired if there was any job for me to do for the repayment of the money. He smiled and said "O no, you don't have to pay this back. It is just a little help I can offer to show my appreciation."

I went back to the "Y" to tell Mr. Marsh how far I had gone. He was pleased, but the question of my school fees, books, bus fare, luncheon and other incidentals were yet unsolved. There was no immediate remedy. I was at the Y.M.C.A. worried.

One thing I did was to eliminate some of my needs. The first in the list of elimination was my luncheon. I got myself into believing that two meals a day was indeed sufficient, no matter what amount of physical and mental work I did. Faith can remove mountains. But there was no way to by-pass my school fees, books and stationery. It had not been long since I registered, therefore the college authorities had made no demand for the payment of fees.

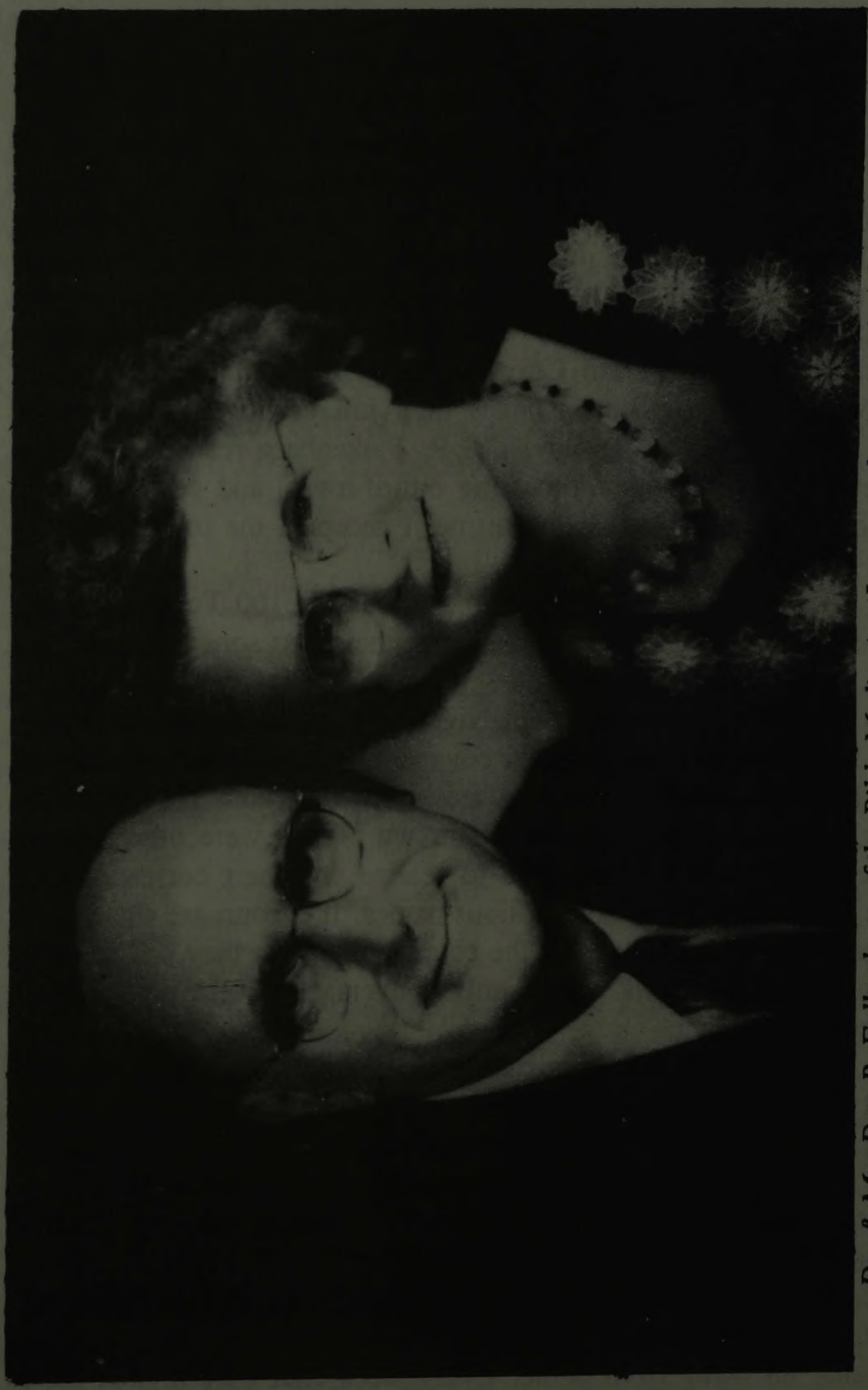
One Sunday morning, I was in my room at the "Y" studying. All of a sudden I had a buzzing noise inside my room. I was frightened and ran out of the room and called for help from an adjacent room mate. He told me that there was no danger, but that it was a signal indicating that I was wanted downstairs at the desk, perhaps, I had

a visitor. I rushed downstairs. There was standing expectantly, a well-dressed youngman, easy-mannered and handsome. He moved towards me with a stretched hand of a friendly welcome and asked: "Are you Prince Orizu?" "Yes" I said. We shook hands. He at once explained: "I am Don, my dad sent me to look for you and to invite you for a dinner in our house next Sunday, will you be able to make it"? "But I don't know you or your Dad!" I explained. Then Don stated that for years, his father who was the founder-president of the Bible Meditation League, had been receiving letters from the Nigerian Christians requesting for free copies of the New Testament Bibles, hence their interest in seeing someone from Nigeria. His father Rev. Dr. R. Falkenberg read about me in a Newspaper while on train going out-of-town, and communicated his son Don to get in touch with me. I accepted the invitation from the Falkenbergs.

The next Sunday I went to their house at 100 Torrence Road. There I met Dr. and Mrs. Falkenberg, their two sons Don Jnr. and Jack, and daughter Mary. They were most cheerful and friendly. They wanted to know all about Nigeria. They brought some letters they received from Nigeria and coincidentally, the first name I saw was that of Gabriel Ejekam, a teacher with whom I lived in the same station when I taught at Ubulukwu. There were others whom I knew. They were encouraged to realize that their correspondents were living beings and not fictitious names. It encouraged them more to realize the potentialities of the country in which they had invested so much on free gifts. While this conversation went on we were served with dinner.

Typical of American spirit, the Falkenbergs were eager to know what they could do for me. They knew the war was on, and that most foreign students were hard put to it.

Dr. Falkenberg told me to regard him as my American father and to regard Mrs. Falkenberg as mother, while Don Jnr, and Jack became my brothers, and Mary my sister. Their emphasis was on the human and spiritual sides of life. They were most eager to let me forget the loneliness of being the only African in Columbus and of being far away from home. Every week-end, they invited me to



Dr. & Mrs Don R. Falkenberg of the Bible Meditation League, who initiated and encouraged my speech-making tours and regarded me as their son throughout my stay in U.S.A.

their house, or they sent me a big piece of cake and other delicatessen. Above all, they wanted me to remain a good Christian while pursuing my academic studies, and as a matter of fact, I came near to being persuaded by them to be ordained and change my political studies for missionary education.

Dr. Falkenberg helped me raise funds for my school expenses. Under the auspices of the Pocket Testament League (now called The Bible Meditation League), he invited me to speak before many Christian congregations and churches all over the Mid West. Through these speeches on Africa and its people, I was able not only to introduce the unknown Africa to the Americans, but also to raise some funds to take care of my university expenses. This speech making became a part of my permanent job throughout my undergraduate days in the Ohio State University. I did not only talk to those church groups, but also extended to other social groups and clubs and sometimes over the radio.

Later in the year, the Dean of Women Dean Gaw took notice of me, and wanted to know more about African women through me. She discovered that I was doing without my luncheon: She offered me another job at the Pomerene Hall (Dining Hall for female students), to wash dishes for an hour every afternoon and have my luncheon there in lieu of payment. I gratefully grabbed the job.

My every hour was valuable – either that I was studying or toiling. My maximum hours left for me to sleep was between 12 midnight and 6 a.m, but generally I applied only four hours to sleep. I usually studied by the early part of the morning any two hours between 2 a.m and 6 a.m.

To study at that time became to me a spiritual discipline and an intellectual improvement. The early morning breeze kept the head cool, its quietness elevated the mind to a state of sober reflections and logical analysis of the subject matter.

My first public talk in Columbus was arranged by Mrs. Chester Gray. I talked to a group the Youth section of the Y.M.C.A. – the Blue Triangle Club. Their president was a young High School girl, Phyllis Rogers, from the Hill Top, Columbus. My topic, which they chose for me was "The Social Life of African Girls". To observe

the American teenage girls listening to a foreigner's story of his own country is a scene to behold. The unique curiosity and restlessness in their glances, the childlike buoyancy and eagerness with which they were endowed, their charming vivacity and boisterousness mingled with audacious inquisitiveness and energy set them apart from any young female group I ever met before coming to America.

I hardly sat down before they bombed me with many questions – some intimate, some general. For example, they asked: "Do you kiss in Africa?" That question was impertinent from African point of view, but the casual manner in which it was asked and apparent unconcern of the audience about its impertinence abated my orthodox attitude. Then I answered: "We don't kiss in Africa." From my point of view I was speaking the truth, because I neither kissed nor saw anyone kiss while I was in Africa. But Mbonu Ojike corrected my view when a year afterwards, he joined me at Ohio State. He told me that people kissed in Africa, only they kissed privately.[1]

My audience envied African girls when they heard how plentiful there were bananas, oranges, *udala*, pineapples, and other sweet fruits in Nigeria. They roared with applause and wonder when they heard that a chicken could be purchased for about one shilling and six pence (thirty cents) in Nigeria of 1938. "Oh! we shall go to Africa!" many of them shouted. Then came a sobering question. With a broad captivating smile, Miss Phyllis Rogers asked: "Do all girls go to school in Africa?" I answered: "No", it is an exceptional thing to send a girl to school in Nigeria. Parents prefer to send boys to school because it was too expensive to send all of them at the same time." Then another rejoined innocently: "But they don't have to pay anything to go to school up to high school." I explained that there were no free schools in Nigeria. Fees were paid from kindergarten through high school. They all sighed with pity for their fellow girls in far off Africa. Then the hossannah of going to Africa turned into a recoil of, "it is too bad over there!"

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1 Mbonu Ojike, I have Two Countries (New York; John Day Company, 1947), p. 7.

Finally, I left those sophisticated teenagers, not knowing how to feel about my Africa. Should I rejoice for the super-abundance of nature's gifts in fruits and vegetable, or mourn for illiteracy and stupor in which the young generation were immured? This agitation subsided in my subconscious mind at that time. I had to forget to think of it because I was essentially preoccupied with my own struggle for existence. A man does not fight for possession of a bed-sheet when he has not obtained a bed itself.

University life is a unique thing in the growth of anyone. If there be any university in the world to boast of making a serious attempt to unify the concept of knowledge and prepare a student to humbly understand his insignificance in the universe on one hand and his inexhaustible potentialities on this earth on the other, the Ohio State was one of them. Once I asked one of my professors what was the aim of education in the Ohio State University. He referred me to an address made by Professor Howard Mumford Jones of Harvard University before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Darrmouth College on March 1, 1937, published in the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*. There Professor Jones said: "the scholar, said Emerson, is man thinking, and the principal instruments of his education are three – nature, books, and action. From nature, rightly understood, he will learn that the laws of the universe are also the laws of the human mind. The office of books is not to create book-warms, but independent souls. The life of action is not to be swallowed up in business, but to translate intellect into character. And the final object of education is that the soul may be weaned from a passive clinging to what has been said and done in the world and prefer instead a vigorous intellectual independence."

It might sound attractive to state the fundamental philosophy of a university. It was another thing to come and see the rigorous processes through which any young student was required to go inorder to emerge as a first class grind. There was nothing gay and sunny about it. Sometimes, in my attempt to grasp that unified concept, I felt that I was indeed pursuing a deceptive shadow in the jungle of intellectual forest. Sometimes I felt limp and exhausted in trying to discover a kind of intellectual unity in the contents of the chosen

and required courses. The multiplicity of courses of study so baffled and intrigued me that I felt I must peep into every class inorder to get a preliminary idea of the subject matter. But that was one of those nightmares of fresh men and sophomores. My disappointment was united with humiliation when experience taught me that mine was an unattainable desire.

I was very fond of Psychology, Biology, Sociology, Genetics and Astronomy. I do not think that a man should live who knows nothing about some of the fascinating principles of Genetics and Ecology. I do not believe that Hitler or Strijdon of South Africa ever studied these subjects. With knowledge of genetics understood and believed, man, even the most barbarous, shall feel more humble.

He shall behold not only the marvels of the unity of the evolutionary elements upon which "Life" depends, but also the common origin and indivisibility of the human specie. Most of racial tyrants and nationalistic jingoists would have released their enormous energy of combativeness in fighting against the common enemies of mankind such as insects, reptiles, and disease germs. When they know the miracles wrought by the accidental combinations of genes on the making of man then no more undue emphasis would be laid on the exterior, immaterial diversities of the physical characteristics of human beings.

I believe also that a bit of elementary knowledge of college astronomy is most essential to everyone. Lack of this knowledge makes a person an impenetrable lump. He will be thick headed, unimaginative and eccentric. He would never grasp the real nature of God's greatness and the littleness of man's role or of the earth's place in the scheme of the universe. In other words, he would not know where he is. He only lives in a superstitious and dogmatic enclosure.

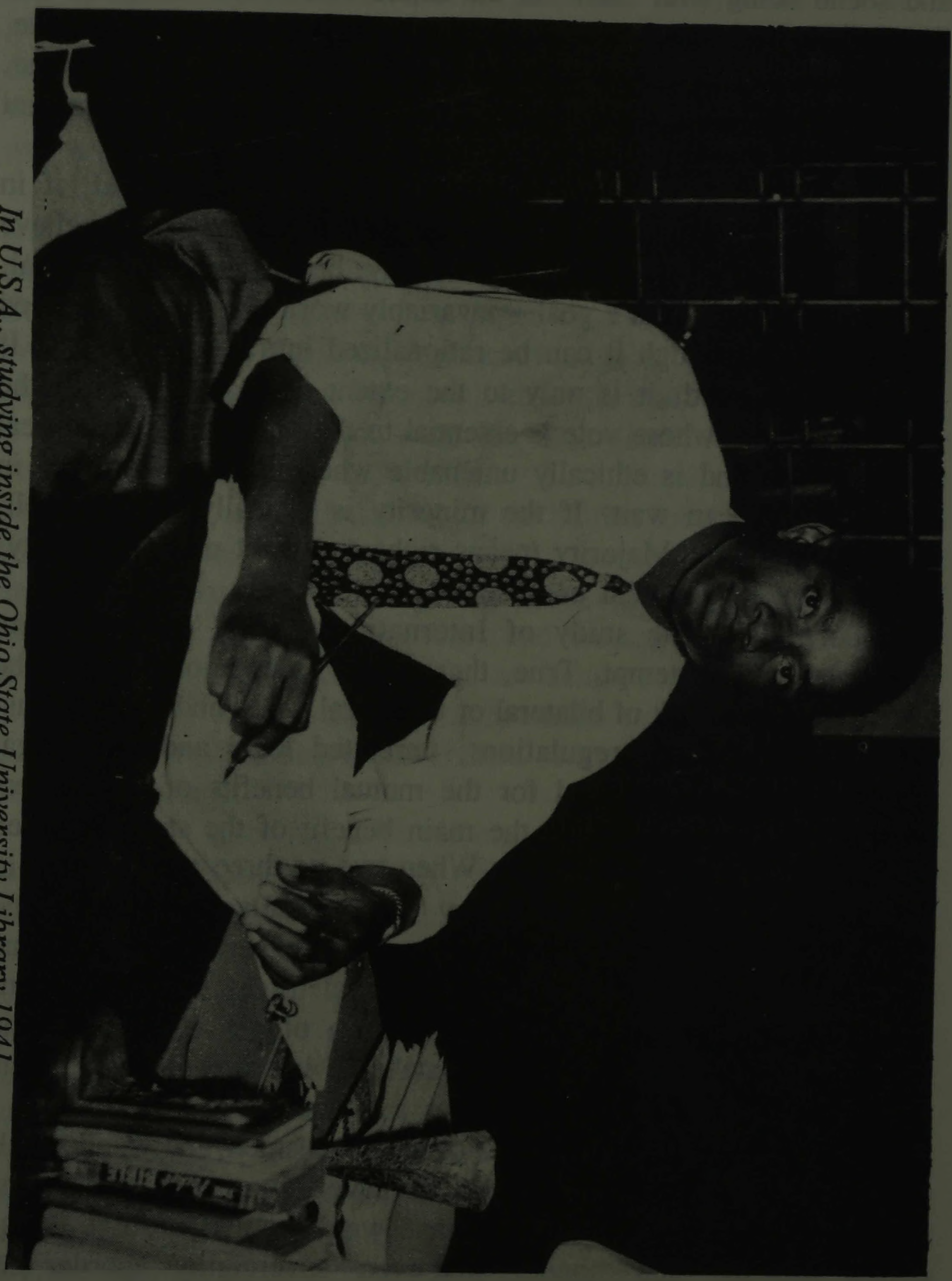
My major field was Political Science. At first glance the study of Political Science appeared exciting and ennobling. But on going deeper into it I discovered so many facts that disappointed and disillusioned me. The first shock was that Western civilization has divorced God from Government. I do not say religion. I say God. Two different things. The principles of Political Science of Western

Civilization concerns itself with how to control man as an economic and social being with "self" at the centre and "vote" in his hands. This control of men involves the form a government would take, the principles to guide, the policy to control, the machinery to execute, the method of organization, the limit of rights of both the government and the governed.

The political government of the West does not indeed, if in theory, consider God's ethics as a part of politics. Man can believe in God. He can go to church on a Sunday, but as a political animal, his function is to attain a goal – invariably worldly. The means need not be ethical, though it can be rationalized into sham morality. If the means is good, it is only to the extent it is acceptable to the greatest number whose vote is essential to the retention of a political office. If the end is ethically untenable whereas the majority is in favour, ethics can wait. If the minority is ethically right – well, they too can wait. Majority means right and right means majority, and of course, God will understand!

Turning to the study of International Law, my confusion developed into contempt. True, there is no International Law. The whole thing is a pack of bilateral or unilateral codes and conventions: a body of rules and regulations, unrelated legal and quasi-legal agreements solely prepared for the mutual benefits of the powers when they are equal, or for the main benefit of the stronger when the weaker is a party thereunto. When two or three are gathered in the name of selfish alliances, they call themselves "nations" and their exclusively mutual agreement becomes a part of international law. What really existed was "international forces". Those nations which force their way and design upon others often took the international law into their hands, make it, interpret it and execute it essentially for their own purposes and interests.

There have always existed certain statesmen and intellectuals whose ideals in international relations have transcended selfishness. They want justice among nations, and would rather sacrifice the so called "prestige" and "honour" and even "sovereignty" inorder that all peoples every where shall live in peace. But the majority of the



In U.S.A., studying inside the Ohio State University Library 1941.

peoples of the western civilization call such men "idealists" with scorn and disdain characteristic of the "realists".

This aspect of Political Science while I was studying at the Ohio State University (1940 – 42) interested me because of its bearing on Africa. When I was told that the importation and use of arms were prohibited in some parts of Africa by "international law" or that according to "international law" Nigeria is not a nation but a protectorate, that by "international agreement", Docemo ceded Lagos to Queen Victoria. I thought that these statements had any validity in truth. It was through studies that I discovered that the whole thing was a farce. Nice words were put together by specialists in euphemism inorder to attain a selfish end through a "legitimate" means. Examples are too many for citation in the whole history of diplomacy in Asia, Europe, America and Africa. Anywhere you turn you get the same story about the sinister nature of our international law. There are exceptions to this rule.

Besides, the study of Western man as a political being presented another dilemma. Political man at his best is not worthy of any respect. He is presented at his best as vicious, selfish, intriguing, mean, cunning, heartless, immoral, deceitful and murderous. He is both a behemoth and a serpent, a student of unbelief and a master of dogma, a crusader in the realm of verbal theories and a champion of inertia in social change.

Political philosophy is confused. It appears to condemn evil in society and enthrones reason in its widest generality. And yet, whenever there is a body of political propositions and theories such as Plato's Republic or Moore's "Utopia," philosophy itself will shout: "this is utopia! – it is out of this world. It is unrealistic!" I therefore began to wonder what to believe. Shall I accept the nature of Machiavellian political man as the inevitable standard or is there a chance for the Willsonian type? The nemesis awaiting the Machiavellian political man is well known, but time without number, the Willsonian – Wallace – Laski type has been crucified without mercy on the altar of phoney realism – realism which never become real but always ends in fiasco.

Throughout my study of Political Science in the Ohio State University, these conflicts persisted, and each day it took wider dimensions in my mind. Those conflicts which involved great moral issues did not abate in my mind even when I left the university.

Still another conflict – more metaphysical than political. It was the problem of Psychology and Chiromancy. As a freshman I registered with the class of Psychology in 1940. I noticed that the first efforts made by my professors in Psychology was to disabuse my mind of the idea of Chiromancy, Astrology and dreams. These things the psychologist said were based on imagination and superstition. They could not be proved in the laboratory, therefore, they were the opium of the unscientific minds.

Normally, every person, whether a scientist or an occultist dreams. Those who do not dream at all are, of course, exceptional persons, and they are indeed few. Even the idea of sleep is in itself a dream – a period during which certain degree of wakeful consciousness of life seems absent. That dream is therefore real, I have never questioned, but I was quite willing to submerge my own personal belief inorder to discover whatever Scientific Psychology was going to offer me. After all I travelled ten thousand miles from Nnewi to Columbus to untrain myself of all my wrong trainings, and to reinforce my thought-process. I therefore submitted myself to the teaching of the college Psychology for four academic years, and emerged with a good average score on the whole.

Encouraged by my grade in Psychology, even though my knowledge was still very limited, I felt that after all, I must have understood the subject matter of the courses I took.

But I had learnt nothing which actually pointed out that chiromancy and dreams were mere superstition. Nor was there any good reason to dismiss chiromancy as nonsense. The reason which scientific psychology offered was that these things had not been proven in the laboratory, therefore they could not be accepted as truth.

Good enough reason. But could chiromancy and dreams be rejected as untrue because man was yet unable to device a means of proving them in the laboratory? When science is unable to prove something, does that thing become false or does science suspend its

judgement? My first experience with reading of palms occurred when I was ten or eleven years old. A school teacher examined my palms and moles and every part of my body and told me ten facts about myself, and made three specific predictions about my early youth and middle life. Up to the time I was in the Ohio State and to the time of this writing, those ten facts and three predictions have been clearly evident in my life and they followed each in sequence as he predicted them. My entire life has so far run along that path which he predicted. Certainly, it is quite possible that the palm reader guessed, and was lucky to guess correctly. But the question arises: how could he have guessed so correctly on all the points? Why must the nature of my life obey all his guesses and things happened to me in obedience to his predictions, even when I had completely forgotten those points until each occurred?

I discussed this matter with my professors in Psychology, Doctor Gibbons and Thackery. I told them frankly that my scientific knowledge so far had not altered my practical experience in chiromancy. As for dreams, it required no proof. If any other dream meant illusion, what about Abraham Lincoln's dream before his assassination?

To my surprise, the learned professors did not contradict me as I expected. They agreed with me in the theory of suspension of judgement before all facts are known, but added that their point was that until those facts are established concretely, nothing could be acceptable to science. That, they said, did not imply a curb to individual conscience concerning his belief in his own experiences in some matters not yet proved by scientific method.

Their explanation satisfied me. Professor Gibbons gave me a gift of a book in Psychology: titled "A Century of Progress" Series: ADJUSTMENT AND MASTERY, (problems in psychology) by Robert S. Woodworth. He autographed the *book, thus: "To Mr. Christopher Orizu, this is a token of my enthusiasm for your purposes and of my confidence in your ability to carry out those purposes.*

Signed: Professor Charles C. Gibbons
Department of Psychology,
the Ohio State University,
May 27, 1940."

How pleased I was for the confidence Dr. Gibbons had in me. And how happy I was that science as such had not overlooked the possibility of exploration into the realms of human destiny. I have an interest in this subject because, to me, man and his life on earth does not seem to have ended only in animalistic origin. There is something extra-animal about man which is rooted in mystery. And the role of certain personalities in history did not preclude the possibility of destiny.

Ojike's arrival in Columbus from the University of Illinois changed my economic plans. He came in September 1940. I let him stay with me in my room at the Y.M.C.A. He needed my cooperation at that initial stage of his arrival. My own financial position was more or less stabilized. I had been adapted to my new-found jobs.

Y.M.C.A. had become my second home. Ojike could not pay room rent at the "Y" for he had no job there. I was now getting some extra funds from my Sunday speaking engagements arranged by Dr. Falkenberg. It was on this line we thrived for a few weeks.

Pressure came from the "Y" authorities about his rentage. Ojike decided to leave the "Y". But for him alone to get into the city and rent a room, feed himself and face his school expenses was most difficult. I therefore decided to join him into the city inorder that our combined economy would make it lighter for him to carry on. I could now afford to pay my own part of the rent without depending on the job at the "Y". Mr. Marsh was pleased that I could now stand on my own in order to give an opportunity for more indigent American students to get into the much desired "Y" rooms.

In our new-found home, we lived in the same room, and fed together. We usually depended on African dishes of Utala and Ofe (foo foo and soup).

Some months after we settled down together, I received a sum of fifty pounds sterling (two hundred dollars), from Nigeria. That was in 1941. Though very small, but it was a boom to me. It did not make much of a difference in my leading a stringent economic life as I have already done for the past two years. I however, had to use it to pay back some loan I made previously.

Ojike and I joined the Cosmopolitan Club of the University. It was an organization for all foreign students on the campus.

A few internationally minded American students were admitted as members to represent America. Majority of the foreign students came from various European countries. The Chinese were next in numerical strength. One Bulgarian, Mr. Clarke, was our President. I was the Treasurer. I was re-elected to that post three times, until I graduated.

By coming in contact with those foreign students, particularly with the Chinese, I observed that they were living luxuriously even while the war was on. The Chinese Government saw to it that all the Chinese students had enough money to live well while studying. Some of them had cars, and they lived in healthier surroundings where rentage was high. They usually came to the meeting in company of some beautiful American girls, and I used to see them at the Ohio Union and Pomerene Hall enjoying better food. They dressed well, and not with used suits such as I used to buy from pawn shops. The European students had better care than two of us. They were better welcomed into white American homes.

I determined to prove to those Chinese that an African student could own a car too. I knew that I could maintain a car at that time because my speaking engagements had expanded, and as a matter of fact, I needed a car to meet up the demands. Not only Dr. Falkenberg who arranged my engagements this time, but I was eagerly sought for among the African-American Communities in the entire State as Xenia, Wooster, Cleveland, Akron, Youngstown, Cincinnati, Dayton, and so forth. Even in Columbus itself, every community group, every church, high schools wanted to know about Africa.

I purchased a La Salle used car. I started driving when I was about fourteen years old at home. My senior brother, taking my father's example, bought several cars for personal use. Among them was a small English Morris Car. He used to teach us how to drive in that Morris. But I never was competent nor licenced in Nigeria. But I took only two days to learn how to drive in Columbus. On the third day I obtained my Ohio driving licence.

How was I able to own a car? I made some more savings and from my saving I took two hundred dollars which was all that the car dealer required as down payment. I had to pay a monthly instalment of twenty dollars to finish the payment. Since I continued to work for my food, and other expenses, I trusted that from my speaking engagements I could make at least the twenty dollars, after gas was paid for.

I was particularly pleased to attend the Cosmopolitan Club with the car. I gave others the impression that I got all the money I used from home. I wanted to keep up African prestige. Everywhere I got a job was private enough that all my friends did not know the secret. I would not go to movies or night clubs. It did not occur to me as necessary then to take girls out. I was therefore able to make constant savings of whatever money I got. What cut deep into my small income was buying of books outside my text books. I loved to buy at least a book a week from Long's Book Store in front of the University Campus.

At the close of the year the Cosmopolitan Club decided to hold an annual formal dance. It was ruled that all the officers must attend that dance. I had never attended any dance before that time. But since it was a rule that all officers of the club must attend, I decided to go. I rented a formal suit for the night but I forgot to ask any girl to go to the dance with me. The dance was to be held on a Saturday night.

On the previous Friday evening, I was up at the Club for final arrangements about refreshments. There our boys asked me who was the girl I "dated" for the dance. There it dawned on me that I had no girl for the dance.

On Saturday morning, I began to rack my brain as to which girl to "date". Previous to that time, I had no girl friend, and I never had a "date" with a girl in Columbus. Many University girls had asked me why I seemed uninterested in them. I had no answer, because I simply did not see the necessity for the company of girls at that time. As I was thinking, only one girl came to my mind. She had just won a beauty contest in Columbus. Her picture was published in the press. She was a junior student at the Ohio State.

She was excellent in Mathematics. And she was unquestionably beautiful. I also knew her father Mr. Bently who was a wealthy real estate man in Columbus, but I had never been to their home.

I found their telephone number from the directory, and asked the girl if she would go to a dance with me that night. She expressed a great surprise that I called her. She asked me why I chose to call her of all the girls. I had no answer, other than that "I wanted to." She told me that it was not done in America that I should call a girl on the very day a formal dance would take place and expect her to go with me. I told her that I knew nothing about American codes of conduct on those matters. She then revealed to me that she was going to another formal dance arranged by her Sorority that night, and that she had accepted to go in company of another youngman – a medical student.

I suggested to her to telephone that youngman and ask him if he would excuse her from that Sororiiy dance. She said she would not, but suggested that she knew that the youngman had spoken well about me, and that perhaps, he might permit her to go with me.

She gave me his telephone number. I discovered that the youngman was one of my good friends on the campus – William Dogger. We had been in Biology class together, and we had mutual respect for each other. I told him my own story about the girl he hoped to take to dance. He did not think the girl would agree to be absent from the Sorority dance where she was an officer, but that he would call her and persuade her to go with me. He then advised me to call her after he would have talked to her. I did. She consented to go with me, but she added: "You are a "killer" Orizu. You can get away with murder."

At 8. p. m. I drove to the 21st Street where she lived and we went to the University. Everything was set. The music was going on. Everyone appeared lively and hilarious. We were all in a gay mood. But there was one hitch. I had never danced in Western style of dancing in my life. My beautiful self-assured girl Mezi Bently did not know that. I was therefore the only one who knew that a comic drama was awaiting both of us.

A dance music started. Every couple jumped up with youthful zest and embraced the rhythm. My girl expected me to jump up and lead her to the floor. But I sat tight where we were. She turned to me and asked: "Won't we dance? Come on let's dance!" I told her I could not dance. She laughed carelessly as if I was telling her a piece of an incredible story. But as soon as we stood up, I asked her to show me how to hold her. She showed me and then added: "Come on Orizu, lead me." I began to push her in a most awkward manner. I guess she was embarrassed indeed. She began to watch other dancers over my shoulder to know if they saw the "Concert" I was making out of her. Little did I realize how much she was offended.

The music stopped. We sat down for a while. When music started again, I expected her to go to the floor again and continue to "teach" me how to dance. She burst in rage, but soft- spoken because she was highly cultured. She said: "Look Orizu, as long as you are in Columbus, never ask me to go to any dance with you. Don't even call me on the telephone anymore. You have spoiled this evening for me. I would have been in the Sorority dance now. If you know you can't dance, why come here with me?" I was sorry for my poor self. I told her to forgive me. I pleaded that I had no spare time to learn how to dance. She answered "Yes, Orizu, I know you study often, but look at all these boys from other foreign countries. They study, too, but they can dance well. I know that you make good grades in the college, but they make good grades too." As I wanted to plead some more, she came with: "Look Orizu, we call this a day, just don't ask me to go to a dance with you next time."

This time I got impatient. I told her quite frankly that "I am not very fond of dancing, and will not mind if I don't dance again in Columbus. In my home, a youngman or woman who usually attended dances, was not considered a best moral example. There is nothing to be proud of to be a good dancer, unless in a purely African way, which does not involve a male and a female holding themselves together. If men and women dance to a music in Africa, they would not hold themselves together, nor would it be at night."

My girl would not take it lying down. She retorted: "But here is not Africa. This is America." I replied: "Yes, I know, but I am an African not an American. I only want you to try and appreciate why I did not know how to dance. It is not because I ignore your social life, but because I reflect my own cultural background." She then spoke quite understandingly: "O, Orizu, don't take it so hard. I have not met an African before. I didn't know about your people's attitude toward dancing. I only feel that you should have some fun as other kids here do. Come on, let's go and have some Pepsi" We went to the bar and had some sandwiches and soft drink.

Typical of American character, as soon as this girl understood the cultural difference between two of us, she respected my culture, though she advised me to adapt myself to American environment, as far as possible, for my own good. I took her advice, and determined to learn how to dance after my graduation the following year. I think that the greatest attribute of American people is that in America, a foreigner is not ridiculed directly or indirectly for his own culture. At times Americans even in their own homes, try to adapt themselves to their guest's culture, just to make him feel at home. They give you a wide latitude to choose for yourself such American ways you prefer. They would not frown at you because you reject some in favour of your own. I had such experience later in 1965.

In June, 1965 when I was President of the Nigerian Senate, I headed a delegation of presiding officers of my country to the 700th Anniversary of Simon De Montforte. We were invited to dinner at the Buckingham Palace. While a guest in the palace, I dined with Princess Alexandra. Both of us were alone on the table. She soon finished the food in her plate while I had not quite finished my own. I commented that in Africa, royal personages did not finish the food in their plates and leave the plate completely empty. They believe that the spirit of their ancestors would not like it because it would look like their children were hungry. They left something in their plates to show the ancestors that as royal children they still lived in plenty. Moreover, they believe that unseen children were around who will eat the left over food later on. If those children found nothing left for them, they would turn back in disappointment

The Princess apologised for it and immediately ordered for more food so she can eat and leave some in the plate to respect my own culture. I was so pleased. We both laughed over it and continued our conversation.

That is one of the most admirable things about English and American cultures of the enlightened class.

In the Ohio State University, my ambition to write a book on Africa started one Sunday morning. I was in Dr. Falkenberg's car going to Dayton, Ohio to speak in a Church. He turned on the radio in his car, and after listening to Negro Spirituals of Reverend Glenn T. Settle, a commentator of the C.B.S. in the New York, made a comment on one book: "My India My America" by Krishnalal Shridharani. The author was a Gandhi disciple who came to the United States as a student. The commentator spoke glowingly about this Indian student and how he presented Indian to America. I felt challenged. "If an Indian student, a young nationalist could present his country to America, why can't I?

In Columbus were several African-American Pastors who were also interested in Africa. Among them was Rev. C. F. Jenkins of the Second Baptist Church. I was a regular attendant of his Church Services. I liked his religious attitude and broadmindedness. He was an inspiring preacher. I went to him to permit me the use of his personal office within the Church building some days in the week to give me a complete solitude to plan my book. To my surprise, he did not only grant my request, but permitted me to use the office every day in the week, except Sundays. He removed his books and other things from his table and told me that the place was reserved entirely for my use.

There was also one Dr. Samuel Wyre who had a wonderful library in his home. It was a specialized library on international affairs and most records of man's effort to make peace were carefully collected here. Dr. Wyre authorized me to visit his exclusive library anytime I wanted. It was from his library that I read most of the books that led me into the understanding of the utility of abstract theories affecting the peace of the world.

There I discovered that for many centuries past, individuals and nations and organizations had been repeating themselves, enunciating in beautiful phrases, what they thought were solutions to world peace. The issue of war and peace had worried our predecessors. But here I learned conclusively, that no verbal theories can win us peace. Men must change their hearts and their attitudes toward their own interests and the interests of others; toward their own convictions and those of others.

My plan of the book then was immature. I was yet an undergraduate, my academic knowledge of international affairs had not widened. My historical perspective had not crystallized into a philosophical form. I was yet sophomoric in my concepts. But I planned something and wrote something only to throw a greater part of it away into a waste paper basket in 1942 when I started my *Without Bitterness* while at Columbia University.

When I began my junior year in the Department of Political Science of the O.S.U., I received an invitation to join the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity on the campus. I was told that this fraternity belonged to the elite among the students. For any student to become a member he must have attained "A" or "B" in all his courses and must maintain a yearly average of "B+" or better. The Alpha Phi Alpha was noted for intellectual snobbishness of its members. I would have joined them but for one thing. Fraternities and Sororities were tribalistic – too clannish for me. Young students were made to divide themselves into voluntary tribes and clans of "Brothers" and "Sisters".

Fraternities and Sororities in America seemed to me to represent a quest for the lost family ties which industrialism brought about in the Western civilization. Men are gregarious. They go in herds. Now in absence of large family groups as you still have in Africa (thank goodness), Americans were substituting fraternities and Sororities. Its social effect did not stop in the college. It went into business and political association. In some ways, it was a sort of a ladder for social climbers. Heads of business corporations employed members of their "frat." first. They were regarded as their big brothers".

Personally, I found nothing wrong with Fraternities. Philosophically, I declined to be a member. I was too much in love with all young people, that there was no room left for me to belong to one tribe among them. We were all brothers. Fraternities offered scholarships and gave other types of aids to their members, but why not an individual work for what he wants and gets on merit only rather than as a "brother". Besides, I already had too many brothers and sisters in Africa. I wanted to create no new ones. In society, every body should be a brother to everybody else.

By June, 1942, I had completed the requirement for B.A. degree for graduation in August. It was now a time for reflection. The war was still on. Things were hard. No funds came from home. By the fact that other foreign students were cared for by their respective governments, it dawned on me that I had no country. Nigeria was under the British Government. British Embassy in Washington did nothing to help me. When I applied for exchange permit for funds to be transferred from Nigeria, I was told that the best thing for me to do was to join the army or go home. Even my American father Dr. Falkenberg once supported this idea.

I personally, up to this time of writing, am very fond of being a soldier. I do not love to kill anyone, but the gallantry of war and military discipline entice me. My ancestors had produced many war generals for many centuries past. But to be told to go to war while I left my home thousands of miles away for the purpose of education was another matter. And the knowledge that Nigeria had only a handful of persons who were educated enough to handle the inevitable social revolution resulting from the war, made me to remain in school.

I wondered how many among millions of Nigerians at home at that time understood the fact that Nigeria was not a nation, how many did appreciate that if any of her citizens suffered abroad, his redemption depended entirely on condescending goodwill of the British official in that country, or nothing at all. Here and there I was asked by the Americans: "Where is your Consul? Who is the Nigerian Ambassador in Washington?" The answer was always: "None!" few Nigerians at home could easily realize what it meant to have no national representative in a foreign land. It takes a lot

out of a person. Others look down upon you with sympathy or scorn. There was nothing ennobling to enjoy in obtaining B.A. degree *when I only came to know that in the realm of international family, I was a citizen of no state, and that the sovereignty and personality of Nigeria were submerged in the substantial existence of Great Britain. In other words, Nigeria was an expression – a shadow, while England was the substance from which reflected the shadow itself.*

To get B.A. degree was therefore not an achievement to me. I felt that no amount of degrees would compensate for a concrete use of whatever education I had got. I have said that I was challenged by Shridharani's "My Indian My America," but now I have come in contact with Nehru's "Toward Freedom," and Lin Yu Tang's "My Country and My People," I had also read some writings of Sigman Rhee of Korea. I had gone through Japanese modern history and I was in love with Prince Ito's original vision. To awaken the world through a book to be written from African point of view; to awaken Africa, and particularly my country Nigeria through American education; became the two greatest obsessions of my life as a graduate of the Ohio State University.

I had written home to report of my B.A. degree. A joint letter came from Chief J. C. Ulasi and J. I. Anosike. They wrote persuasively, urging me to go to England and complete my law studies. They felt that I was just a born lawyer. They knew that I took some pre-law courses in my undergraduate classes.

I was unable to accept this advice. In point of fact, they were quite correct in thinking that it was a more lucrative profession for personal gains in our Nigeria of that day. But they knew little about my decision to seek a means to effect a social change in Nigeria. I would not permit myself to be tied down with a professional wig which might prevent me from active engagement in the battle field of freedom. Fear of forfeiting my wig might frighten me away from the prison gate during the decisive moments. Lawyers in other countries like India might have been the champions of their country's freedom. But Nigerian experience, at that time showed that most lawyers played shy, and enjoyed "good boy" diplomacy in the face of national humiliation.

Not only that, I had made up my mind that American education was the best for Africa. Colonial school policy was abhorrent to me. I wanted to transmit this idea to Africa. My only desire then was to make America to be conscious of Africa, and then to return to Africa with some message from America. With this idea I left Columbus for New York, thus transferring from the Ohio State University to Columbia University.

Chapter Fourteen

IDEAS THAT USED ME

But let us not forget that an idea which had knocked in vain at many a mariner's mind knocked at Columbus' mind and was let in. A great idea whose time had come used him. That is glory enough for one lifetime on this earth.

– Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick.

Beyond purely academic pursuit in my Ohio State University days, lay an immense wealth of other experiences which stimulated and enriched my ideas, and which finally propelled me into action. Ideas are ammunition. One great teacher compared them to a mustard seed – something that has vital existence – germinating from a tiny substance into an enormous plant.

Ideas are more potent than we care to contemplate. And nothing is more pre-eminent in the whole existence as ideas. They represent the entire vision of man. All God's thoughts, all the mysterious ways of nature are being revealed to us from century to century by a few men of vision who allowed some ideas to use them. Such men were indeed ordinary. What separated them from their contemporaries were the ideas they allowed to germinate in their minds and which they carried as a suggestion into other minds.

I am not here suggesting that I consider myself someone who has brought any new idea into the world. That would be not only false, but in every respect pretentious.

What I feel bound by my conscience to state are the trends, some of the most significant experiences which nurtured my passions and awakened my intellect; some of the already existing ideas given

birth to by great souls of the past and being interpreted and practised by the contemporaries when I became apprehensive of them. I feel duty-bound to state how seriously some of those ideas influenced, inflamed and ignited my soul, how I was pushed into the arena to fight for what I considered right for my country and for humanity.

The coming of those ideas to me while I was in America started my life on a new path – on the rough edges of thorns and pricks where I was challenged, discontented with myself and my country and my race. From thence my life has found no rest, nor has any one who came in contact with me had any rest. I have had no peace with the world of my interior standard, nor with the society and social order into which I was born. From thence I intended not to make my life easy, until what I considered to be the greatest reason for existence is done, by, for and among the countries of my race, as is the case among other countries of other races.

One of those ideas came to me during my initial registration with the Ohio State University. I was required to pay what they called "Non resident fees" as distinct from regular University fees paid by every student. When I enquired into the reason why I must pay the "Non-resident fees", I was told that the University was controlled and financed by the State of Ohio. It was a land-grant institution started in 1873 as Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College. The name the Ohio State University was adopted in 1878.

The money with which the University was run came from the appropriation by the Ohio State Legislature. It was the tax payers' money. The Ohio Tax Payers, therefore were entitled to a reduced rate of payment because their money was being used to support the institution. When an Ohio resident pays ninety dollars for the annual fees, a non-resident such as I was, would pay three hundred and fifteen dollars. For an Ohio State resident, college education was almost provided for the asking. To attend another University of the same ranking with the Ohio State, which was not state-controlled, would cost more than two thousand dollars per annum.

I was further told that although I was not an American, but that if I stayed in Columbus for over two years and kept a good academic record, the President of the University could waive the

non-resident fees for me, and I could thereby enjoy all the educational facilities of the college with the same nominal fees as the Ohioans. "But then, I would not be paying tax, or would I?" I asked. I was told that, that was not the concern of the college authorities. The State Officials were responsible for the collection of taxes. Besides, there were certain sales tax and other assorted taxes which every resident of a state paid without being conscious. As long as you buy bus tickets, milk, clothes, watches, and so fourth, you were paying certain state and federal taxes without knowing it.

At the close of the first academic year, I maintained a "B" average in my entire academic work. The Dean thought that I did rather well and deserved some consideration. This, added to the intervention of Dr. Don R. Falkenberg, the non-resident fee was waived for me. The president, Dr. Howard L. Bevis, wrote me a kind letter to that effect. Instead of paying three hundred and fifteen dollars, I had only ninety dollars to pay, but in addition, I was working for my rent, books, feeding, transport to school etc.

My thought went back to my first lecture where the teenage girls told me that they got their education free up to high school. It meant simply this: that a child born in Ohio State had an opportunity to free (and compulsory) education from his infant school to secondary standard; that if he chooses he could still attend a university, paying only a nominal fee of ninety dollars a year, and sometimes the whole fees were waived.

The area of Ohio State was only forty one thousand one hundred and twenty two square miles, with a population of six million eight hundred and thirty six thousand, six hundred and sixty seven in 1942. But this state alone had at that time five thousand four hundred and fourteen public schools, seven hundred and fifty five private and parochial schools and sixty four Colleges and Universities. In 1942 the whole of Nigeria with thirty three million persons and an area of over three hundred and seventy five thousand square miles, had not a single university, nor a public school either nationally or by regions.

I said to myself: no wonder American "teenagers" feel so free and independent. It is a result of being born into a society which

accepted each of them as an item of collective responsibility. When a child is born he is made to feel welcome into his society with all the doors of opportunity widely opened to him. The parents pay taxes. But the money is rightly used to educate their children in a free and confident atmosphere providing facilities for self-discovery and personal security. To contrast an American child with an African .oze my blood. What hideous crime has a child committed to be born an African? As soon as he was born he was thrown back on the laps of his parents whether they were poor or rich. If they were poor (and the overwhelming majority are poor), the child carries the badge of poverty printed in a bold relief all over his body. From the womb to the grave he toiled hopelessly with all the handicaps of deprivation, unknown, unencouraged and unappreciated.

He was left alone to struggle with diseases, and his mind and mental faculties were left in ignorance and apathy.

The fault was not altogether that of the British or European. Most African countries had no organized school system before the coming of the Europeans to the continent. No doubt, there were universities in some ancient African kingdoms, but a dark age eclipsed the whole area at the time when light was making entry into the modern Europe. But Europeans had been in Africa for some centuries now. They had been in absolute control of its economic, social and political resources. Why should these European powers permit ignorance to continue in Africa when they accepted the natural resources there for their own economic well-being?

From henceforth, *the idea of introducing state controlled schools for free education of the Nigerian citizens occupied my mind.* I had my eyes focused on Nnewi area where I thought I could make an experimental beginning. I began at once to communicate my idea to Nnodu Okongwu who was then at Lincoln University. I suggested that he should specialize in education in order that he could become the pioneering principal of the school I had in mind. I sent letters home to some of the leading Nnewi men preparing their minds about this matter. Later, I shall discuss fully how I attempted to materialise this dream, and how, selfishness, clannishness and ignorance conspired to postpone its earlier prosecution.

Another consuming idea came to me from my trip to Richmond, Virginia, in company of Mbonu Ojike. It was toward the close of 1940. We decided to spend our Christmas holidays with Mrs. Giddings and her group of Universal Negro Improvement Association of Garvey. Our visit to Virginia was prompted by several motives. First, I had wished to see Patrick Henry's state and his grave because of his speech of "Liberty or Death" which was delivered on the eve of American Independence from Colonial Status. Second, Mrs. Giddings assured us that by coming to Virginia we would meet one Colonel Cox, an ex-congressman whom she said loved Africans and Americans of African decent. Third, she guaranteed that by lecturing in Virginia, we could raise some funds for our school expenses. Our fare was guaranteed. Nothing could have been more enticing.

We left Columbus for Norfolk by train. Not very long after we left, three young white men marched to our seat. They looked at us disdainfully as we were chatting heartily about American scenes and the wonderful speed of the luxurious train. It was fun to relax from the pressure of school work, and I was particularly dying to see Patrick Henry's grave. Historical figures always seemed like legend to a youth. And how happy I was that my legendary hero was going to be a real person whose grave I could see.

But the three young men did not stop at their awkward looks. They told us to get up from our seat. I thought that either they were drunk or were just a group of hooligans. I therefore maintained silence and told Ojike to ignore them. Our silence seemed to have infuriated them more. They began to swear at us and to molest our persons. In an impatient voice, I told them to go their way. They immediately attempted to drag me away from my seat. I was equal to three of them, because they did not appear robust and healthy looking as people from well-fed and well-bred families. I handed Ojike my wrist watch and a book, and told him not to worry for I could take care of them. One held my tie while I was chasing two with my fist. As this went on, my glasses fell from my eyes and got smashed on the floor. As soon as this happened, I started to hit them narder. One ran away, and Ojike joined by holding the other on his tie. They all fled and came back shortly after with the

train guard. The guard discovered that we were Nigerians. He gently told us not to feel offended because ordinarily, "coloured people are not supposed to stay in this coach with the whites." He warned the young men not to bother us, for they may get into trouble. I showed him my broken glasses. He told me that as soon as we arrived in Virginia he would bring up that matter with the Police, and the culprit would pay me for them. Before we arrived in Virginia, those rascals had fled. They were not to be found in the train.

We were royally received at the railway station in Norfolk. Mrs. Giddings was a wonderful hostess. The African American Community in Norfolk were most friendly. They were eager to know about the affairs of Africa and the trend of Africa's struggle for independence. We spoke in their churches and forums. What surprised me was the emphasis the African Americans here laid on the fact that news about us were fully reported in the white newspapers in Virginia and our pictures with some white friends including Cox were published in the front pages. I could not see what was important about that, but to the Southern African American, for a black man's picture to appear with dignity in a front page of a white paper at that time was an unusual incident calling for celebration.

Colonel Cox posed to us as a friend of the African American. He was one of the ardent supporters of the Bilbo plan to repatriate all African Americans back to Africa, preferably to Liberia. Cox's aim was to make us the victims of his diabolical day-dreams and chicanery. He introduced us to the Governor of the State of Virginia, and we spoke over the radio about Africa. Questions were posed to us over the radio which tended to bring from us a message to the African Americans that they would better enjoy life in Africa. I must say that we were not sufficiently informed on such persons like Cox in those early years of our stay in America. I mean, wolves in sheep's skin.

Cox gave us some copies of a Congressional Record presented by Bilbo to the Congress of the U.S.A. for repatriation of the African Americans. I found the contents of that Bilbo's diatribe to be a mere historical trash with a tinge of inaccuracies and misrepresentation. It was an insidious plan to cloth racialism with the garb of love.

With Cox we went to the grave of Patrick Henry. We were also taken into St. John's Church where they said Patrick Henry attended. I went into the church and prayed to God to help us as He helped Patrick Henry to stand fast by the principles of "Liberty or Death" which sustained American patriots in the days of their final and critical struggle for freedom.

Leaving St. John's Church, we decided to ride home on a bus. In the bus was a notice to the effect that African Americans should sit behind white passengers and not on the same seat. Considering the scene on the train where I lost my glasses, and reading this bus notice, and thinking of the statements of Patrick Henry who was born and honoured in this State, then I began to wonder what that "Liberty" meant to Henry and the Virginians. Was it liberty for the white race? It was a stunning blow to my belief – I mean absolute belief in expressed ideals of orators. I had thought that everyone in Patrick Henry's own state should be all liberty, all love, all brotherhood, but my eyes saw differently. In Virginia I saw hate and prejudice incarnate. I saw human beings employing cruel and ruesome tactics to perpetuate man's inhumanity to man.

Christianity is a charming religion. The Pastor of St. John's Church hurried to show us a Bible he said Patrick Henry used. I touched it – I opened it. Ojike and I glanced through a portion on the sermon on the mount preached by the father of christianity. "What hypocrites some of the contemporary christians are?" I asked Ojike privately. His reaction was as gloomy as mine. A matter like this might have passed unnoticed, but for one who took the sayings of great men seriously and who truly believed that humanity had conscience, and that conscience had been given the greatest expression in America through Patrick Henry's trenchant demand for "Liberty or Death", the matter presented a blackness of the night in the eyes of the mind.

"Liberty or Death"; these two decisive words. I came all the way from Nigeria to Norfolk to re-dedicate myself about the task of following the foot path of those who succeeded to uproot colonial status from the same empire which overshadowed my own country. And on the soil of that Virginia where I came for rededication, there

my own liberty was more restricted than when I was inside the British Empire itself. There, the chain of slavery was forged and used unashamedly in open day light. There, the passion of love was dimmed by the barbarity of hate. It is ironical however that the first African American governor of a state, Douglas Wilder was elected by the people of Virginia. Ojike and I returned to Columbus after our stay in Virginia. We were grateful to the African American Community of Norfolk and to the whites who joined in welcoming us and making the people of Virginia hear about Africa through us over the radio and in the newspapers. But an idea had come to me from my Virginia experience. I shall fight for liberty without minding the cost because Patrick Henry who chose death instead of slavery or chains was a real human being and not a legend. In fighting for that freedom, I must remember that my fellow black race in Virginia and other Southern States were still in chains and virtual slavery. America (some part of her) has then a need for a new gospel of love, perhaps from Africa.

Another idea which used me originated from my visit to Cincinnati, Ohio. It is interesting to note that as far back as August, 1942 when I was yet an undergraduate at the Ohio State University, I had grown so restless about what Africa would be after the second world war that I was invited on several occasions to express my views by curious and internationally minded Americans. One such invitation came from W. L. W. Radio Station, Cincinnati, Ohio, to speak over the radio to the whole world. On August 16, 1942 at 5.00 p.m. I made my second speech broadcast to the Americans.[1] I spoke on Africa's contribution to the allied war effort, the role of Nigeria in world peace, the right of Nigerian citizens to national freedom, and what Africa as a whole wanted after the war. In effect, I started to call for Nigerian Independence before any meaningful political party was set up in Nigeria or any other country in West Africa. Immediately after the broadcast, a group of unexpected people thronged on my way out from the broadcasting studio. They rushed

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1 Nwafor Orizu, A. A. *Africa Speaks* (Horizontal Publishers, 1990) p. 90.

close to me for introduction and my autograph, then a married couple insisted that before going back to Columbus, I must "have a bite" in their home. They were Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hernelly. They were so insistent that I had to yield.

We drove to their home which was practically on top of a hill. Cincinnati, unlike Columbus, was set amid hills of exquisite beauty here and there. Several of Kernelly's friends were invited to meet me. "A bite" turned into a sumptuous dinner. As we sat on the table to eat, there arose sudden, bold and extravagant questions on Africa. As had been my experience in several other occasions in the past, I practically missed my portion of the dinner because while others were eating, I kept on answering questions. Mr. Kernelly was a man of calm decisiveness. He possessed tranquil and inspiring dignity. Mrs. Kernelly was a piece of art by her very personality – a specimen of natural elegance and grace. She was one of the best hostesses I came across in the United States.

Before I left the Kernelly's for Columbus, they gave me another invitation in advance to come to their home to spend my next holidays.

They wanted to visit Africa sometime in the future. Not waiting for the holidays to come, Mr. Kernelly telephoned me one day that he would like me to come to Cincinnati by the week-end because one Mr. Wilson, the President of Wright's aeronautical plant of Cincinnati, where Mr. Kernelly was an employee, was very much interested in my radio broadcast, and wished to have a chat with me about Africa. He would bear the cost of my travel.

On arrival, Kernelly gave me a "pass" with which to get into the plant. During the war, those places were guarded. The atmosphere inside the plant was that of ominous consciousness. The workers realized that they were engaged to mass-produce the instruments of death, that beyond the boarders of the United States, other sons of men were handling those lethal weapons which they were manufacturing in order to annihilate human lives and demolish cities and civilizations. There was, therefore, nothing frivolous or easy going about the disposition of the workers in that war plant. And their seriousness and sense of urgency was contagious. It affected me while there.

I had to go through several channels before I get to Wilson's office. Wilson said that he was originally an English man and that was why he was interested in my broadcast about the British Empire over the radio. He looked more like a professor of philosophy than a business executive.

His disposition betrayed him as a man whose intellect recoiled from the horrors of war, but who felt that like death, war was inevitable and must be supported in order that greater good might come.

I told him my own impression of the war and its adverse effects on African students in the U.S.A. I emphasised the fact that for Africa to be free, our students now in American and European Universities must be encouraged to go through their educational courses unhampered. Wilson talked most understandingly. He offered his own co-operation and stated that for long he had had some interest in the welfare of the underdogs. On the plight of the students, he pointed out that those of us in U.S.A. Colleges should understand what America was fighting for – America was fighting for political and *economic democracy*. Here I asked him what he meant by economic democracy. I do understand political democracy, but was there anything which could be properly described as *economic democracy* in practice? Wilson said "yes" with absolute confidence. In order not to deviate too far from our general discussion on African welfare and war, I did not bother for further explanation. I was shown some sections of the war plant. I was reminded that Wright, the plant owner, was the inventor of the aeroplane. I had visited his plant in the suburbs of Colúmbus where I lived.

I had luncheon with President Wilson, during which time we discussed my own personal problem in the Ohio State University. Wilson felt that the British Embassy in Washington should do something positive to help African boys under the Empire who were stranded in the United States. He gave me a cheque for two hundred dollars towards my school expenses, which he said if I found it possible, to pay him back, if not to consider it his own contribution to my education. I said to myself that perhaps this was what he meant by *economic democracy*. I left Wilson thankfully for Columbus.

One day in Columbus, I was introduced to another business man from Youngstown, whom I asked to explain to me how America fought for *economic democracy*. He began by distinguishing between fascist and Nazis economic principles which he said were both different from that of the United States. American system had no special pattern nor was it uncompromisingly rigid. America practices or attempts to practice economic democracy. It simply meant an economic system which recognized individual initiative on one hand, and general good of all on the other. At this stage of American social evolution, the common man's interest was being recognized more and more in the formulation of the economic policy.

I asked: "I thought that America practices and believes in capitalism?" My friend agreed but added that America practices "reformed capitalism." By this, the capitalists have been controlled to a degree where the wealth of the nation was virtually enjoyed by all its citizens. This was done through Governmental Legislation. Laws were made to control wages, subsidies, labour conditions, taxation, and monopolies. Labour Unions were encouraged. In other words, capitalism was reformed to meet the demands of economic system which recognizes the equal right of all individual citizens or groups to carry on such activities as were necessary for their material progress and security without absolute interference of the state.

A man like Henry Ford was a good example of what could happen under the system of economic democracy. He started without any cash. He had other partners who had the cash and property. For his knowledge, he was given 25% per cent of the stock and a yearly salary of $3,600.00. His only asset was his engineering knowledge. Their business grew fast. But his associates clung to old fashioned and unbridled capitalism, while Ford courageously introduced into American economic life, a phase of economic democracy. I asked how he did it.

"Simple," said my friend. Ford insisted that in order to sell his automobiles in large numbers to many people, higher wages must be paid to the working men. He disapproved of the theory that prosperity meant luxury for the few only. Ford succeeded, and before long, all American businessmen followed his way. There was a time

in American life when things like automobiles, frigidaire, telephone, television, furnished apartments, were considered exclusive luxury. Now, they have become a part of necessities for all Americans – poor or rich. Efficient mass-production method had reduced production costs. This enabled the masses to buy at a low cost, increased the workers wages, while shareholders still received higher dividends and reserves.

"Can *economic democracy* ever come to Africa"? I asked. "It is not within my power to explain the ingrained conservatism of the human mind," he murmured. "I have never been to Africa, but I know that most of that continent is backward and under European powers. The Europeans have certainly grasped the fact about our new economic democracy, but their innate conservatism makes it difficult to apply themselves completely to it. Not unless they adopt our system, Africans under them would know none of it."

Great conversation is usually an accident. He had raised a great issue which made my throat become dry. I felt awkward. He little realized what a great fire he had lit in my mind. But there still remained a question. Although America had achieved a great degree of mass-production method, but some European countries had also attained a stage of high efficiency in production method.

To this point, my friend agreed but explained that some of the European countries had copied American system of production only half heartedly. They had substituted machine efficiency for human labour.

That achieved for them a low production cost. Unlike Americans however, they were reluctant to share their increased profits with the workers, and care little in making the public enjoy lower prices, nor had they encouraged credit system as universally as the Americans. This was because European business men dreaded competition. They held fast to monopoly. Perhaps in Africa, they had set up combines which set prices for their own manufactured goods as well as for the Africans' raw materials. In America anti-trust laws restricted extreme monopoly of this kind.

Anti-trust laws were made to control immoderate monopoly or combines at the expense of public good. The American businessmen

had therefore learnt to produce best possible things in order to carry the favour of the buyer. To please and control the consumer became a creed of economic democracy. European businessmen by and large, decided among themselves, how much they could demand from a buyer without arousing public discontent, and the buyer simply paid the price. Such practice in America was criminal and punishable by law.

The average worker in America knew that he struggled merely to get more and more shares and increased profits – not that he was entrenched in abject misery. He knew that his children had as good a chance to education and future possibilities as those of his boss. He did not have to wait until he became a millionaire before enjoying the useful luxuries of American civilization.

That was what economic democracy meant. America had not attained it to perfection. Then he added: "There are still inequalities here. But that America stands nearest to that goal of all the great nations of the world, there is not much dispute. Besides, the American businessmen have learnt to contribute enormously to non-profit organizations. The Federal Government has encouraged them in this direction by granting tax exemption to useful organizations. It has become an accepted practice of all business corporations to establish funds for yearly contributions to such various civic institutions for the blind, the lame, the orphan and so forth. Such funds came from the profits made by such corporations, which in some countries are never used for the public good, at least not with the same enthusiasm and scope as in America".

This idea of *reformed capitalism* captured my mind. How can it be practiced in Africa? How can our rich merchants contribute to the public good? How can workers in Africa enjoy the results of their labor in the same measure as their bosses? Can machine efficiency and its mass production and low cost be introduced into Africa? Can workers produce and purchase cars, produce and own frigidaires and washing machines? Can they furnish their own houses, wear good clothes and educate their children with the same facilities as the *senior servicemen* and moneyed class?"

These were some of the questions that agitated my mind, and for which, in seeking answers to them, I involved myself in an educational campaign for a Continental Destiny.

On the campus of the Ohio State, I was a member of the Ohio Union and the Y.M.C.A. During the summer of 1940, I was one of the representatives of the University Youth's Association to attend the Lake Geneva Conference in Wisconsin. American Youths representing other universities attended. Camp life was a welcome escape from cloistered urban environment. It was exciting, jovial, simple, and something as natural as my Nnewi village life in Africa.

Eminent professors headed several panels for discussion on current issues of the world. I participated in several of those panels. On one panel, we discussed what that professor termed "The Vision of Progress" He began by describing the human mind as a *dynamic conception*. He dismissed John Stuart Mill who said that the mind was simply a "mysterious something which thinks and feels." He challenged the view that the mind is just a separate dictator which controls the action of the body. He rejected the idea that "man is a mere plastic mechanism – vulgar vessel of clay" – as the medieval theologians would let us believe. Rather, "the human body is a chemical change which is always in motion. It is irritable and changeable and yet functions harmoniously." The body and the brain developed first. Mental activity followed, as a natural sequence.

That brought about the acquiring of the mind. The mind erected human civilization.

Mind, in other words, "is a condition of becoming aware of the environment, and the utilization of that awareness". That is knowledge. When knowledge is extended we say that the mind is increased. Mind is neither a mystery nor an immobile entity. It is the result of the activity of a finished chemical complex of the body upon its environment. That is the basis of progress. The mind grows more and more as the unified complex of the physical body developed into greater efficiency, harmony and co- ordination. That is why with the body, the mind grows indefinitely. And that is why human civilization is anticipated to grow indefinitely to a higher and better

order. That is the logic of those who believe in the "Vision of Progress", said the professor.

This concept started with man's implicit confidence in science as opposed to religion. Man shifted his interest from the "Kingdom of God" to the "Kingdom of Man." Montaigne, Bacon and Descartes, helped to repudiate orthodox christian objectives. They emphasized that the purpose of life is to learn how to live successfully on this earth rather than how to die poor in order to enjoy the unknown paradise. They rejected the notion that the wisdom of the ancient was infallible. Blaise Pascal declared with Bacon "that the latest generation is the most ancient." Those whom we call the ancient were indeed new to everything; whereas we, who have added to their accumulated knowledge and experiences should claim the right to maturity which we inadvertently revere in them. The latest born are the oldest in existence. The earliest date with the earliest men constitute the babies of time and children of civilizations. To think differently is to suffer from the illusion of time.

I asked the professor: "In Africa, we generally believe that original men were born with superior frame of mind, longer life, higher ethical standard. How can I reconcile this notion with this new theory?" The professor asked me: "Do you not agree with Perrult who said: "nothing is more unreasonable, or even more ridiculous, than to suppose that nature is no longer capable of producing men as great as those of former centuries. The lions and tigers which rove the deserts of Africa today are quite as proud and as cruel as those of the time of Alexander or Augustus; our roses are as deep a crimson as those of the golden age; why should men be exempted from this general rule?"

I asked another question: "How can this theory of progress be applied to Africa?" The professor answered sharply: "The progress of man as man shall continue despite international inequalities, racialism and imperialism. What happened in Ethiopia or Manchuria, for example, cannot arrest the general progressive trend of human civilization in Africa or Asia. It may delay it, but after a short delay there may be a faster stride than ever before. Imperialism is not a special experience of the Africans or the Indians."

Another young student asked: "Are we to believe from what you have said that man can eventually attain perfection through the process of continual progress?" He answered: "Perfection is the attribute of the gods. By progress we do not mean perfectibility. We simply mean that human mind is peculiarly adapted to express the faculty of being continually made better and therefore susceptible to constant improvement. Besides, there are those who quarrel with the word "change." To them, "change" (and not "progress") is inevitable."

My mind wondered over these things. I wondered how our moral mind has improved better than that of the ancients. I could not imagine what principle the modern man could develop that surpassed those embodied in the *Sermon on the Mount*. There would have been no First and Second World Wars if we understand the ideals of platonic love. In the field of science I admitted that we were more ancient than our fathers. I associated myself with those who disagreed with the theological view of the universe. Theology was different from morality. Moral laws established by the ancients could stand the attacks of science and the test of time.

I grasped the idea that Africa could not defend itself against domination by others unless its people were ready to repudiate certain ideas of the universe and cosmic phenomena. They must believe in the infinite capacity of the human mind and the mechanical complex of the body. The principle of evolution and all its implication must be placed side by side with the idea of fatherhood of God. Most Africans have not come to the realization that our body is a simple machine which vegetates and dies without special intervention of the gods. To most Africans, any man who died must have done something wrong to the gods or to his fellow men. If Herbert Macauley died at the age of eighty years, some Africans would attribute the cause of his death to his political sins. If Chief Bode Thomas died at a youthful age of thirty six years, well, he was "killed" by the magnetic spell of the atmospheric wizards. The old idea that everything was fated was wrong. Nature's gift to man to control his environment was in itself a "fate". To achieve anything on earth man must use his own God-given faculty. Nature obeys its own laws even when

administered by man. That is fate. It is not a repudiation of God. It is a vision of progress. *To reach and stimulate the human mind in Africa through education: to make it believe in the vision of progress became one of the ideas which possessed and used me.*

I left Lake Geneva for Chicago to spend a part of my summer holidays. It was here that another chain of events started which brought home to me another dominating idea. I met my friend James R. Stewart of Cleveland. He was on tour of local branches of the U.N.I.A. (the Universal Negro Improvement Association) of Marcus Garvey. I first met Stewart in Brooklyn Branch of the Garvey Movement in the summer of 1939. In Chicago, Stewart was on a campaign movement for the forth coming election to the President Generalship of the U.N.I.A., and he was on his way to New York where the election was to take place. Marcus Garvey had just died in London. His disciples therefore were vying among themselves for the successor.

Stewart invited me to their New York Convention and offered a free car ride all the way from Chicago. I accepted the invitation. In the meantime, I discovered that Ojike was in Chicago too. I therefore gave Stewart one condition. I was willing to join him to thc convention provided that he could also give Ojike a free ride. He agreed. But the poor car was too crowded. We packed like sardines throughout the trip.

The New York Convention elected Stewart President-General to represent Marcus Garvey in the whole world. The following African students were present – Nkrumah, Ojike, Mbadiwe, Dr. Akiki, Nyabongo, Okala, Okongwu, Ikejiani, Adjei, Jones-Quartey, Fitz John, Mbura, I. U. Akpabio, J. L. C. Nsima, Nwankwo Chukwuemeka. When James Stewart won the election of President-General, the issue of investiture arose. He had to be crowned with a special robe and crown.

All the members decided that since Africans were there, it would be of historic significance that an African should put the cap on his head. That, they believed would make Marcus Garvey happy in the grave among the spirits. Stewart came to me and whispered that they had decided that I shall perform the investiture ceremony and

put the crown on his head. I was surprised and humbled. When I was called upon, they handed me the crown which I placed on the head of James Stewart amidst thunderous applause, clapping of hands and stamping of feet.

The spirit of Marcus Garvey was invoked. The people sang and danced and jumped around for a brief moment. The African students joined them in jubilation and we all felt at home. This is one of the experiences in my life that I can never forget. When the convention was over, I became more anxious to know all I could about the life and philosophy of Marcus Garvey. All I had to do was to follow up the invitation of Stewart to visit Cleveland Headquarters of the Association. I was attracted to discover what Garvey thought and believed which made his brief but eventful life in U.S.A. so historic.

During the summer of the following year, I went to Cleveland as the guest of the U.N.I.A. under the presidency of Stewart. I lodged at the official headquarters of the Association where Stewart himself lived with his family. It is both impossible and unnecessary to state all that I learnt at that period. But I shall make a brief survey of the major points made by James Stewart, including what I read from the "Writings and Philosophy of Marcus Garvey," "The Negro World," "The Black Man," and other pamphlets at the U.N.I.A. headquarters in Cleveland.

Marcus Garvey was a short, punchy, adamant fierce-looking, fabulous prophet of the "New Africa." He was born in Jamaica some fifty years before his death in 1940. He came to the United States in quest of livelihood after the first world war. He was black, black in colour, black in philosophy, black in plans. He considered himself a prophet, a crusader, a king, a St. Peter, a Henry Ford, a George Washington of the black world. As a preserver of the race, Garvey planned a black God, a black Christ, a black angel, he instituted a black Church, a black Star-line, a black army, and a black philosophy. He conceived of a black nation wherein all the black races of the world would become common citizens under a black government. His central American war cry to the African Americans was "BACK TO AFRICA."

Garvey was serious. He wanted all the peoples of African descent in the Western world back to Africa both physically and psychologically. He was horrified by the process of what he considered "de-Africanization" of the Africans in the United States. He discovered that some African Americans were ashamed of their African background. They tended to change their hair and skin and through miscegenation, some "pass" into the white race.

He was also a racial purist. He would not tolerate light skinned African Americans because, he thought they were not good enough for the pride and dignity of the pure Africans. He therefore separated them from his organization. Garvey, was not particularly educated, but from his own writings, analogies, dialectical conclusions on the issues of races and nations and men, it appeared that he must have read widely. He was not a university graduate, but like Charlemagne who towered in European history whereas he could neither read nor write, Garvey ushered in African American history without the background of Harvard, Columbia or Yale.

He delved deeply into the evolution of man and his biological background in order to shatter the principles of superior race. He enumerated with prophetic candor the many great names of the black race, who built nations, gave birth to new ideas, conquered other nations, accumulated fabulous wealth, became kings and queens or ranked as scientists. Convinced of his history and logic, the dismaying contrast between the black man in history and the black man as African American or as a European colonial, appeared outrageous. Garvey was bewildered.

He was a sensitive idealist. To him the black race, and particularly the African American, was experiencing a dark age. Their illuminating past was eclipsed. The known present was intolerable. The distant future looked dim.

Garvey therefore asked: "Must Africans and peoples of African descent admit that a black is born inferior and made a perpetual servant of the whiteman?"·

This thought brought an inner conflict in him when he discovered also that some African Americans were against his idea of back to Africa Movement. He recognized that there were two battle fields.

The outer battle field where the mighty army of the white race, with all their pride of color, backed with wealth, law, science and power, would clash with the hard vested forces of the minority African Americans in America, and the inner battle field where, behind closed doors he faced the grim reality of the more dangerous warfare of the African American against the African American.

At this difficult cross-road, Garvey felt that he was called to prophethood. He was eager to reform the black world, starting from the United States. The shivering group of African Americans, must be encouraged, to stand erect socially and face the world of other races with self confidence which could come from hard work and originality in thinking.

He was a prolific writer, a tireless pamphleteer, and a passionate speaker. Though an idealist, Garvey was also a practical planner. He set up some impressive halls all over important cities of the United States called "Liberty Halls." I visited those halls in Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, New York, Cleveland, Philadelphia and Norfolk. He dreamt and set up business enterprises. Among them was his Black Star Line – a steamship company. His idea was to purchase ships to ply across the oceans. But the first ship which he bought foundered during its maiden voyage. There the tragedy began. Later, Garvey was charged with using mail to defraud, by the United States Government. He was convicted and deported. Later, he went to London where he died after several years of pain and anguish.

On the whole, I could understand Garvey's idea of inspiring legitimate pride in the African Americans. They ought to take natural pride in the beautiful way nature had made the black race. The plan of back to Africa was of course, impractical and indeed undesirable. To think of a universal racial program, directing all the black race against the white race, was to rush into a dark void in order to grasp a deceptive shadow. On the surface, it appeared to me at once that Garvey's program was a visionary movement, based on emotional appeal which found a fertile ground in the period of economic depression following the World War I. Most adherents were the slum-dwellers, the uneducated masses of the suffering African Americans, who felt that they had no place in American society,

and would rather return to Africa, their father-land, where hunger and racial discrimination were supposed to be absent.

But I did not dismiss Garvey and his U.N.I.A. merely as a visionary organization, I felt that every dream of a man could be made real by another when placed under circumstances more favourable for the realization of what was once a dream. My ambition was not to build a racial nation in the Garvey sense but I was aware that there were African nations which could be revived to play an honourable role in the world. I was not pleased with the fate of African Americans in their own country. Discrimination here, ostracism there, snobbishness behind, defilement in front, threatened in the day, lynched in the night – the personality of the African American – the descendants of my Africa, was split between a lingering fear and an interminable horror.

My mind was lifted up when I remembered that Nigeria was a great African Country with tremendous economic possibilities. Then I looked at West Africa with all its population and political wakefulness. Having come in contact with many promising West African Students such as Kareffa-Smart, Jones-Quartey, Fitz-John, Ako Adjei, Kwame Nkrumah, I felt that Garvey's slogan of "Africa for Africans" could be translated into "African Irredentism" a reclamation of Africa from foreign rule, and making it a tolerable continent for all races and nations to live in peace, while acknowledging the Africans as the equals of other races, and their nations as sovereign states. It was from Garvey's writings and philosophy that the idea of "Africa for Africans" crystalized in me. I also discovered that it was from Garvey that Azikiwe became fond of the term "New Africa."

From henceforth the idea of "Africa for the Africans" in the sense that our continent should be controlled, developed and governed by Africans became crystalized in my mind. And I could not think of any other way to accomplish this except through education."

It is not that I came to America to learn how to love my country. I have already loved my country before coming to America. I have already resolved to be useful to my people before I met Azikiwe in 1937. What I owed to Azikiwe was mainly that he pointed out

to me where to go in order to prepare myself. What I owed to America was that it fed my soul with abiding ideas, deep fidelity and central integrity of conscience in making a final decision as to *how* to make my own humble contributions to the cause of my people's freedom. The ideas I got from my American experience made me to focus my entire attention on human personality as the greatest and most dignified thing in the world. Any social program which does not emphasise the development of that human personality; any philosophy of freedom which does not consider its success in terms of how far it promotes human personality and happiness, or which does not take man as the measure, has failed.

When I was interviewed by Dorothy Norman of the "New York Post" in New York (see New York Post, Daily Magazine Section, January 27, 1944), she wanted to know how I intended to introduce democracy into Nigeria.

My answer then was that, by and large, we were a democratic people before our contact with the Europeans in the nineteenth century, hence I stated: "I have no intention of going back and "telling" the people to become democratic. I believe that the first thing to do is to offer education to the people. Then they will think out for themselves, once given the opportunity."

Within this context my educational program of the American Council on African Education (A.C.A.E.) which I am going to discuss in the next chapter was not started because I was an educationist or because I loved to be a teacher. It was started in order to give a concrete meaning to the American idea of development of human personality, as a basis for a true democracy, orderly progress and human happiness.

SECTION IV

FULFILLMENT OF DREAMS – A STRUGGLE AGAINST AN EMPIRE

This section is an epitome of concretization of Orizu's ideas and hopes nurtured from his early experiences from home, through two American Universities, Lincoln and the Ohio State, where his ambition to fight the evils of imperialism was fertilized. With an unusual tenacity and incredible audacity, he wrote what many call "the African Bible" (*Without Bitterness*). whose impact upon American society in relation to Africa of that day was unparalleled.

As Sterlin North wrote in the 'Chicago Sun', about *Without Bitterness*, "read this powerful book by a Nigerian and ask yourself, "what are the aims of our warlords", and whose intellectual subtlety and demonstration of comprehensive knowledge was described by Dr. Melville J. Herskovits in 'the New Republic' as "one of those rare statements by a native of a colonial possession, which not only presents the native point of view, but presents it vigorously, judiciously and without rancour, and with full comprehension of its setting in world history and politics. For most persons, his book will reveal a new approach to the colonial problems. Certainly *Without Bitterness* should be read by all who are concerned with long range question of establishing and maintaining world peace". This book made the most conservative American magazine 'the New Yorker' to write, "a sincere and interesting book about Africa, the state of its civilization, its past, its future... by an intelligent young son of a Nigerian ruling house who must be the most literate prince alive today."

Also in its own book review, 'the New York Times' exclaimed that *Without Bitterness* was "a grim grave warning levelled at the peoples of Europe and America, at the leaders of the United Nations."

Dorathy Canfield rightly added, "never before have we been reached with such a powerful appeal to realise the potentialities of that enormous mass of humanity which lives in the dark continent."

On the same *Without Bitterness*, Walter E. B. Dubois commented in the 'New York Herald Tribune', "an unusual book written by an African for readers in America, and written with far more understanding of both African and world problems than such writers usually exhibit". Then wrote the 'Chicago Daily Law Bulletin', "*Without Bitterness* is one of the few things published in America about modern Africa, and the best I have ever read ... Orizu has a mind brilliantly cut, a mind widely informed by the best in many cultures of the East and West .... He has a vigorously scintillating style, beautiful diction, wonderful command of ideas and sources".

The above testimonies from American leading news media in the spring of 1944 when *Without Bitterness* was first published is self evident. It explained the authority and influence Orizu wielded among American Universities, Congress men and women, and upon the cultural aspects of Rosevelt's administration.

Earlier, Orizu, with the co-operation of his colleagues, organized the African Students Association, and established a magazine, the "African Interpreter" both of which had their headquarters in his room 411 International House, New York City. Above all he established and incorporated the American Council on African Education with office at the prestigious 55 West 42nd Street, between Fifth Avenue and Broadway in Manhattan, New York City. With the co-operation of liberal Americans and organisations such as the NAACP of Walter White and Roy Wilkins, and individuals such as Pearl Buck, Wendel Wilkie, Mrs. Eileen J. Garret, Henry Aggard Wallace, George Schuyler, Mrs Eleanor Rosevelt, Mrs Mary Macleod Bethune, Congress woman Mrs Frances P. Bolton and important colleges and universities, the American Council on African Education sent Africans to study in America in a number never known before.

– Editor

Chapter Fifteen

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward for a world founded upon the Four Human Freedoms – freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want and freedom from fear.

– President F. D. Roosevelt.

As I was about to leave Columbus for New York, I felt it a duty to bid farewell to my professors, among them were Dr. Henry Russell Spencer, the head of the Political Science Department, and Dr. Frederick Heimberger. Both of them tried to persuade me to continue my graduate and post graduate work at the Ohio State University, but I stated that I was unable to do so. Dr. Heimberger then felt that the best next place for me to go was Yale University. He gave me a letter of introduction to a New York Wall Street business executive who was also an alumnus of Yale.

Then I went to see Dr. Howard L. Bevis, the University President. He regretted my leaving the Ohio State, and said that if it was because of financial difficulties, he was prepared to grant me a full scholarship to enable me to study for my masters and doctorate degrees without any further expenses while at the Ohio State. He said "Youngman, we think you have a good mind, and we like to have you here". Then he added: "Dean Park holds the same opinion about you".

Knowing that I had made up my mind to either return to Nigeria or stay in New York, I found it difficult to say anything to this rare opportunity. Realizing the full import of the offer, I told the President to give me a few days to tell him what I planned to do.

A few days later, I went to the President, I told him that it was necessary for me either to go home or proceed to New York. I could not therefore utilize the scholarship he generously offered me. But I added quickly: "I have only one request to make." "Go on," said the President. I asked him if he would transfer that scholarship to another African I might recommend. He granted the request promptly by saying: "I shall be prepared to accept one or two of your boys."I leaped with joy and went back with a feeling that to secure admission and full tuition scholarships for two deserving Africans was even more important than the degree I obtained. I did not obtain such full tuition scholarship myself while I studied at Ohio. I paid my way. All I got was the waiving of the non-resident fees after I made well academically, and completed a year's residence. From the standard of my personal experience, I considered those boys very fortunate.

I set out for New York City. One of the things I did was to go down to Wall Street to deliver Dr. Heimberger's letter because he urged me to deliver it in person. The recipient, after reading the letter, asked me several friendly questions about myself and Africa. We enjoyed a short conversation when he picked up his telephone to call the President of Yale University. Long distance telephone call in America is sometimes quicker than the local calls in Nigeria, for in a few minutes the New Haven Telephone Operator had connected the call and they spoke for about five minutes. The gentleman turned to me and said: "I have succeeded to persuade the Yale President to grant you a fellowship for your M.A. degree at Yale. Yale is a fine school; and I hope you like it there. Dr. Heimberger spoke very well about you and he is my good friend."

I was flabbergasted because my plan as to where to register was not yet completed. Yale was an important educational institution. I was indeed attracted, but my intention to remain in New York City if I failed to go back to Nigeria was a very strong one. I needed a place from where I could operate my program of education for Africa. This aim cancelled all the known personal advantages, quietude, security and all that would have come by my registering with Yale University with one year's scholarship already assured.

I was so careless about the affairs pertaining to my personal safety that I never even dreamt of soliciting for any scholarship for my own use in New York. Columbia was very expensive, particularly where I intended to take a course in the Law School where we paid $20.00 per point. The die was cast. I had made up my mind that I was not going back to Nigeria. I had abandoned two scholarship offers, which I obtained from both the Ohio State and Yale Universities.

It was my aim that my registration for M.A. degree at Columbia might not stop me from carrying out the educational program for Africa. To live at the International House at 500 Riverside Drive was an ideal for a foreign student. It would take me right into the centre of the world youths – serious and hard working young men and women from every part of the world who lived there. They said it was a "melting pot."

Now faced with paying my way through Columbia for my post graduate course, I sought financial help from a philanthropic organization The Phelps-Stokes Foundation of which Dr. Jessie Jones was at the head. Dr. Jones was friendly disposed towards me and was quite willing to help me with a scholarship grant. But we parted ways when he said he would help me only if I stopped supporting Zik. He claimed that Zik was a dangerous man who did not know God. Instead of encouraging Africans to be good citizens by studying Religion and Agriculture, he was deceiving people and leading them to civil disobedience. This ended my approach for financial aid from Phelps-Stokes. I rejected Dr. Jones offer. I had to face paying my fees at the expensive Columbia so long as I had decided to reside in New York where I could work conveniently for the African Students' Organization and my scholarship scheme for Africa. As already implied, it was not possible for my people from Africa to send me reasonable money while at the Ohio State University hence, I practically paid my way through college. On registering with Columbia, I felt that I must first of all get my other relatives to make use of the two scholarships I got from the Ohio State University. I therefore wrote Chief J. C. Ulasi, advising him to make plans to send two of his immediate relatives who were my cousins to proceed

to America in 1942, so that by the year 1946, they would become finished products for his own business. I submitted the names of Cosmas Ikeotuonye and Ndukwe Obi. This was to satisfy him that I have not forgotten him. I had other closer relatives with qualifications, but I wanted my guardian to realize that he had the first "say-so" in my life. I considered it impertinent and ungrateful to have started selecting boys from our family without the knowledge and decision of Chief J. C. Ulasi even though he knew nothing about the origin of the scholarships.

He replied promptly saying that not until I first returned to Nigeria could he support the other two boys, to come to America.

Surprisingly, just recently Cosmas Ikeotuonye now a retired High Court Judge confided in me that Chief J. C. Ulasi sent for him from where he was an agricultural officer at Nkwerre Ezunaka to tell him the story of my offer of scholarships to both him and Ndukwe Obi and for him to be academically ready to utilize the scholarship when ever he J. C. Ulasi shall call upon him to proceed abroad for higher studies on my own arrival from America. The confirmation of this episode by Justice Ikeotuonye made me very happy. Unfortunately, Chief J. C. Ulasi died just before I arrived Nigeria from the United States and that postponed this initial attempt made for these two cousins to use the scholarships. This notwithstanding, however, after I had established my A.C.A.E. in Nigeria, I still offered the scholarships to both young men. Ndukwe was able to use his own to become Nigeria's first cinematographer while Cosmas Ikeotuonye selflessly chose to concentrate first on catering for J. C.'s estate with me. He later on studied Law in England.

Columbia was indeed a large school. The population of the students in the university in 1942 was twenty five thousand nine hundred and seventy five men and twenty one thousand four hundred and fifty six women. It was neither owned by the government nor controlled by any church, its affiliation with Episcopal Church notwithstanding. Columbia has a colonial background. Its original name was King's College given to it in 1754 during the reign of King George III. In 1784 its name was changed to Columbia College. Unlike the Ohio State, there was no co-educational plan in the

undergraduate classes. Men undergraduates attended Columbia College. Women undergraduates attended Bernard College just across the street on Broadway.

In graduate and professional schools men and women could attend classes together.

Buildings were massive. The libraries contained over one million, six hundred and sixty two thousand, eight hundred and eighty three volumes then. The institution was wholly international, it was also one of the scientific life-wires of the world. It was one of the members of the Associated Universities incorporated with the United States Government Contract for Nuclear Research. One of the attractions I had for Columbia Law School was that the then United States President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was a graduate of Columbia Law School. I thought it was good enough for me to tread where this American hero had trod.

Around Columbia were many interesting institutions which made it unique. Julliard School of Music, The Riverside Church of Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, the Hebrew Theological Seminary, Grants Tomb, Union Theological Seminary (the Library here helped me greatly in my research on Nigeria when I was writing my thesis), the International House (where I lived). I also spent sometime at the office of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace across the street on the Amsterdam Avenue where they published a favourite periodical – *International Conciliation*. Such environment was of great help to me. It helped me to see the world more clearly as others saw it.

Take International House where I lived for example. It hung just above Hudson River from where a constant energizing breeze flowed in. I had seen an International House on the campus of the Chicago University and another in Los Angeles, but the New York City International House was the most impressive with accommodation for over seven hundred graduate students of different countries of the world. Apart from interchange of cultural ideas among the students (one needs to witness different native dances performed by each country at the House on Hallowyn Day), the most single item of importance here was the fact that every student

at the International House was serious and invariably nationalistic. Only graduate students from foreign countries live here.[1]

In the history of my days at Columbia University, I shall not forget Deans Kamen, Pegram and Russel, who helped in the initial establishment of my scholarship program. They served as members of the advisory board of the A.C.A.E.

One day Okongwu came to me in New York to inform me that he planned to return to Nigeria. Since he left Nigeria in 1938, all the people he left at home had died – his mother died, his senior brother died and to crown it all, his uncle and sponsor – Jonathan had also died. All these created a financial problem which does not encourage him to contemplate on further studies. I persuaded him not to go home with only a B.A. degree. But his financial difficulty was clearly self evident. Considering my program for the Nnewi college I had in mind, and also being desirous to have Okongwu in New York with me, while we engaged in silent war of independence, I decided to seek any possible means to help ourselves. Okongwu was in education. Columbia University where I had already registered had a famous Teachers' College. I therefore met Dean Russel of Columbia Teachers' College who was already acquainted with my scholarship program for the whole of Africa and also my plans about the Nnewi State College in which he expressed profound interest. I solicited his co-operation in making it possible for Okongwu to register for his M.A. degree in his college and told him that he had no funds. He graciously offered tuition scholarship for him. Then I told him he would have no funds to take care of other items such as accommodation, feeding, books etc. He advised me to meet Dean Kamen of Graduate Faculty, that since I was in graduate school and was in their good books, they would readily help particularly if I told them that he, Dean Russel had offered tuition scholarship.

I made an appointment with Dean Pegram. He was kind enough to see me on the appointed date. I presented to him my problems.

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1 International House has expanded greatly in accomodation and population. I am happy I am today a Global Patron of this great International house.

He wanted to know more about my program, so I told him all about my plan for scholarship for Africans and the program I had, to found a state college in Nnewi and the role I planned for Okongwu to play in the college program. I told him about the tuition scholarship offered by Dean Russel. He said he would give it a thought and see what he could do to help. He told me to come back after three days to see him. After three days, I went back to him.

He said he had made an arrangement for Okongwu to be employed at the faculty club as an elevator boy. He was to work three hours there daily and he would be given free breakfast, lunch and dinner there. Apart from this, he would be given an allowance to help him pay for his rent at the International House where I had arranged for him to live. What remained was his books and other incidentals which he felt we could plan and handle. He could not go beyond the above arrangements. I was very grateful for his kindness and benevolence. I thanked him immensely and left.

I told Okongwu about these. He too was very grateful. Concerning books etc, I asked him to help me in my office during weekends, and with whatever money I paid him to take care of his books etc. With these arrangements, Okongwu settled down for his studies. With him also was H. A. B. Jones-Quartey of the then Gold Coast (now Ghana) who was also granted scholarship at Columbia Teachers' College on the same A.C.A.E. platform for his M.A. degree in English. Hence Columbia University was the first leading university in America to actually offer tuition and admitted Africans on scholarship of the A.C.A.E. All other scholarships offered from other universities and colleges so far, were to wait until I returned to Africa.

The Indian Independence was a burning question in America at that moment, and all Indian students at the International House were Gandhi boys. There were few Jinnah boys too, but whether an Indian was a Hindu or a Moslem, they agreed on the question of Indian freedom from the British Empire. There were many South American students whose recent history was beset with internal difficulties. There were Chinese and the Phillipines, some refugee students from European countries. Everywhere you turned at the

International House you met a problematic question of freedom. It was during this period that I witnessed practically the role of students in a fight for national freedom. Indian students were most articulate, agitative, persistently vigilant in their denunciation of imperialism in their country. In comparison with those students, we African students seemed tongue-tied, passive and somewhat shy to declare our right to freedom.

I may therefore, state briefly the history of the African Students Association of the U.S.A. and Canada. I had nurtured the idea of helping to start a body to group all African students in the United States. There were not many of us at that time. For instance, at Lincoln University, there were only about eleven African Students, and this was the largest concentration in the whole of the United States, followed by those at Hampton Institute. One thing that struck me most forcefully was that there was no organization of African students where they could come together and speak with one voice. I proposed a meeting of all African students at Lincoln. The idea was supported by most students but the late Kwame Nkrumah felt that the meeting should be postponed till later date. Because he was the eldest and the most senior African students, his opinion was respected. But this lack of collective action by African students in the United States of America was one of the things that continued to hunt me till I transferred to the Ohio State University, Columbus Ohio. It was there that the idea of an African Students Organization resurfaced in my mind and I was determined again to do something for its fulfilment. I soon met Dr. John Kareffa-Smart of Sierra Leone at Columbus. He was a student at Otterbin College, Ohio. The son of a Chief in Sierra Leone, he later became the first Foreign Minister of Sierra Leone. We talked about the war then raging and especially the lamentable fact that Africa was not being mentioned in discussions of post-war plans. This fact challenged both of us to do something to articulate Africa's case before the world audience. I was a first year undergraduate having matriculated from Lincoln University, but John had already obtained B.Sc. degree. Having invited John to my residence in Columbus Ohio, I recalled how my earlier attempt to forge an organization of African students in the United States at

Lincoln University had been delayed, and now resolved to try again. I brought up the proposal to form such a body during this my discussion with John and he welcomed it. We then decided to initiate joint action in order to bring the scheme to fruition. Both of us found money and on June 7, 1940, we sent the following letter to all African students, inviting them to a meeting.

"June 7, 1940.

Dear Sir,

These are momentous days, in which we find ourselves engaged in the pursuit of knowledge so far away from the land of our birth. The importance of the events which are transpiring across the sea naturally constitute a challenge to our thinking and action. Moreover, the challenge also presents an opportunity, for this, we believe, is a "tide in the affairs of men" (and nations) which we must take at its flood.

It is in order that we shall be ready with one voice to proclaim "The New Africa" and to present a united programme for her nurture and development that we, the undersigned, take this opportunity to invite you to share with the rest of us the duty and responsibility of preparing for the leadership of The New Africa.

In the first place, we believe that we must stress the urgency of a real consciousness of the role which Africa has played, is now playing, and is destined to play in the affairs of the nations. We must get rid of all artificiality in our concepts of our race and our great motherland, and we must develop genuine pride in our past and a worthy sense of our mission to the future. While the present, in which exploiting grip we are held powerless, is tottering about us, we must be ready to rise with one voice and one strength, to build out of its ruins The New Africa, which, as Nnamdi Azikiwe so ably describes her will be characterized by Spiritual Balance, Social Regeneration, Economic Determinism, Mental Emancipation, and Political Resurgence.

In the second place, we are forced to act together, we see the fate of the small nations, – even those whose national consciousness

leaves nothing to be desired. This should constitute a grim reminder to us, of what might well continue to be our own fate if we remain disunited and unaware of our united strength. On the other hand the plight, equally sorry, of the imperial democracies reveals that the dawn of new relationships between these nations and our Africa cannot long be postponed. But the establishment of these new relationships depends entirely on how ready we, the sons of Emergent Africa, shall be, when the time comes, to demand our rightful place in the "Commonwealth of Peoples of the World."

Finally, ours is not an isolated challenge and opportunity. If the little sea to the east of our continent was no barrier when the great prophet of freedom, Mohandas K. Gandhi came and received on our soil the birth of his life-long devotion to the cause of freedom, let us not now regard it as a barrier to keep us from uniting, with one voice and resources, with our Indian brothers, in the cause to which they have pledged themselves.

In view of the above considerations, we, therefore, the undersigned, shall regard it as a token of willingness to co-operate in united thinking and planning if you respond as soon as you can with suggestions and constructive criticisms. We hope to be able to arrange for a meeting at some convenient central place this summer and will eagerly await your immediate suggestions as to when and where. We shall be counting on you.

Yours for the New Africa,
/Sgd:
John Kareffa-Smart, B.A., B.Sc,
(Sierra Leonian)
/Sgd:
C. Nwafor Orizu (Nigerian)

P. S. Address to:
C. N. Orizu
c/o Mr. A. D. Gaither
251 W. 20th Street, Columbus, Ohio."

A good many of those to whom we addressed responded favourably and we decided to inaugurate the conference in New York City in the Summer of 1940. Invitations for the summer conference were distributed by me. I addressed the assembled students on the value of having such a body which was to provide a platform upon which we could speak with a united and more effective voice about the liberation of Africa. My idea was applauded. I suggested that the meeting could proceed to elect officers and allocate responsibilities. Once again, Kwame Nkrumah raised the point of order that an organization of that nature was already in existence. After much disputation, the meeting resolved to give Nkrumah six months within which to revive the organization which he mentioned as existing, failing which, anybody was free to plan for a new organization.

When six months elapsed, nothing was heard from Nkrumah. I therefore invited the late Mbonu Ojike at the University of Illinois, and K. O. Mbadiwe at New York University to my residence at 186 Hamilton Avenue, Columbus Ohio in 1941. I wanted the three of us to review the original constitution, which I drafted, of what later became known as the first constitution of the African Students Association of the United States and Canada, popularly known as The Ohio Constitution, to establish an organization of African students and to invite other African students to join us in the crusade to publicise the conditions in Africa which were misrepresented and distorted by the Western media and to articulate her aspirations for freedom in the post-war era. The review and approval of the draft constitution took us three days. For those three days, I did not serve them with any American dish. I served them with our African diet such as foo foo and various kinds of soup. One remarkable thing happened. I did not put salt in our food. When they wanted to know why, we discussed the matter. Because our minds work at the same nationalistic frequency, they readily agreed with me that food without salt for those three days will remind us that the battle for freedom to which we were dedicating ourselves by starting a united students movement in America was not going to be sweet. We might as well



R to L. Mbonu Ojike, myself and K.O. Mbadiwe at my 186 Hamilton Avenue residence in Columbus Ohio reviewing my original draft constitution of the African Students Association of the United States and Canada in the autumn of 1941.

remind ourselves of the nature of our undertaking by serving ourselves with saltless dishes.

At the close of the meeting, we decided to take protem offices to get the body off the ground. I moved that Ojike and Mbadiwe take the posts of President and Secretary respectively. I chose to be the Information Officer. During the summer of 1942 we summoned a meeting of African students in New York City and laid before them the fruits of our labour in Columbus Ohio. They accepted our Ohio Constitution, and new officers were elected. Nkrumah became President, J. L. C. Nsima became the Secretary, Ako Adjei became the Information Secretary, and I was elected the Vice President. It was however decided that the office of the organization should be in my residence where all official meetings of the body should also be held. This was at 411 International House. The name of the organization was changed from African Students' Union to African Students Association of the United States and Canada. Later, I became the President of the organization. Thenceforth, African Students in America became officially and collectively active. We were now able to voice our opinion in matters affecting Africa in any way possible. We came to know each other more.

But there was one inherent difficulty in foreign students' organizations in the United States which is not true of those in England. To travel from one end of America to the other, that is from the Atlantic East Coast to the Pacific West Coast, was almost as long as travelling from Lagos to Liverpool. Just to get a clear idea, the area of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Island was 93,991 square miles. The area of the continental United States then was 131,669,275 square miles. There were more universities and colleges in each of the leading states of the then forty eight states in America than in the whole of the United Kingdom. For example, there were eighteen degree-awarding colleges and universities in England and Wales three of which had lesser status. Scotland had four. Northern Ireland two. This was a total of twenty four universities. Compare this with one hundred and six colleges and universities in New York State alone, one hundred in California, or ninety- nine in Pennsylvania or eighty-six in Texas or sixty-six



With some members of the African Students Association of United States and Canada including Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, K.O. Mbadiwe etc.

in Wisconsin. Ohio had sixty-four, Illinois eighty-seven, Iowa sixty, Michigan sixty-four. These were just a few examples at that time.

African students in the United States found themselves scattered all over the American continent, and it took a rich student to afford transportation to meet another student. Since there were many universities, there was no need of all students cloistering in one or two institutions in a city. United Kingdom is just like one state – not a big state – in America. Organization and cooperation of students there, would be easier. This will show the enormity of the difficulty in founding an organization as opposed to founding the same type of organization in a small place such as West African Students Union in England. That was the problem we faced in trying to unite African students in America. Usually, it was only those who lived in New York City that had the responsibility of keeping the organization going, while others only participated through communication and by attending annual conferences.

This was the principal reason why I gave up the scholarship offered to me at the Ohio State and at Yale after my graduation in 1942. I felt the need of staying in New York City if the African Student's Association was to perform its function in a manner similar to what Indian students were doing. The official meeting place of the association and correspondence address was in my own residence: Number 411 International House. We met every alternative Sunday, except when I called an emergency conference. Just like other interested students who had to return to other American States where they were studying, Kwame Nkrumah who did not participate in the founding of the organization was not living in New York to play any active role in the day to day administration and responsibilities of the organization.

At this stage, my dream to establish an organ of information matured and the 'African Interpreter' with its administrative headquarters in my residence was inaugurated. I was fortunate to have Nnodu Okongwu and H. A. B. Jones-Quartey to be in New York City with me because I obtained scholarships for both of them at Columbia University. Their residence in New York City at this time was most helpful to this program, and they were kind enough



Nnodu Okongwu and myself in front of International House, New York, 1942.

to accept my request to establish the magazine. Jones-Quartey was the Editor assisted by Okongwu. We all contributed articles to the organ for the enlightenment of the American people and government. At that time, the few students scattered over the American States were not in a position to contribute meaningfully to the establishment of the "African Interpreter." Quartey and Okongwu were working voluntarily just like myself. Mr. I. U. Akpabio who from time to time presided over the meetings in Nkrumah's absence, made some financial contribution. Mbadiwe who had decided to found African Academy of Arts and Research and the magazine "Greater Tomorrow", resigned as the General Secretary of the African Students' Association on November 15, 1942, during a meeting of the Executive of the A.S.A. at the International House, New York City. This divided his entire interest in the African Students Association. The official address of the African Interpreter was also my own residence: room 411 International House 500 Riverside Drive, New York City.

We sent delegates to Washington from time to time to interview the British Ambassador or American officials for our national welfare. We sent several cablegrams to Churchill and Roosevelt on African questions, and even about Indian freedom. Important organizations dealing with allied war aims took notice of us and solicited our opinion on matters affecting Africa. We persistently defended the cause of Africa wherever it was misrepresented, misinterpreted or ignored in America. We were invited to panel discussions on Africa and the war.

Perhaps it is necessary to note that previous to this time, because of complete absence of organized indigenous African opinion in the U.S.A., certain American whites or African American institutions or even individuals had taken upon themselves to interpret Africa for the Americans. The American public had no way of knowing about the real Africans. Those institutions such as Dr. Yergan's Council on African Affairs, or the Phelps-Stokes Fund depended on second-hand information which they handed over to the Americans in any way they thought applicable to their pre-determined opinion

of the ought-to-be in Africa.[2] While our students association was not antagonistic toward those institutions, we determined to force them to acknowledge our opinion on Africa as more authentic and genuinely indigenous than their own conclusions drawn from travellers' writings and colonial government statistics. We were prepared to co-operate with any American institution that acknowledged this fact. Those who insisted in ignoring African indigenous opinion, we discredited openly. It worked.

African Americans, their editors, educators, church leaders, business men turned to us for information. Dr. Channing Tobias, Walter White, Mrs. Mcleod Bethune, Dr. Charles Welsley, Dr. Modeccai Johnson, George Schuyler, John Sengstacke, Carl Murphey, Earl Dickson, Dr. Reddick, Roy Wilkins, Elmer Carter, Dr. W. E. B. Dubois, Rev. Claton Adam Powell, Paul Robeson, these and many other important African Americans identified themselves with our aspiration to be free.

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and her husband, the President of the United States gave us all the unofficial encouragement we needed. Mrs. Roosevelt attended our functions at our invitation because she was interested in foreign students from everywhere. Many other liberal white Americans like Mayor Larquadia of New York, Rev. Harry Emerson Forsdick, Dorothy Norman, Ephygene Salsberger, N. A. Lamont, Henry Aggard Wallace, Dr. Hertskovits, Dr. Howard L, Bevis, Congress woman Mrs. Frances P. Bolton, Wendel Wilkie etc, followed the wake and encouraged us to stand firm by our resolution to introduce indigenous African opinion in the United States. What impressed me during this period was the amount of liberty a person had in America to express his opinion even in a critical period as a time of war. After all we were just America's guests studying in that country. That country was at war, and we kept on criticising her greatest ally – England, and that very America encouraged us to express our opinion. Not because Americans were

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2 A. A. Nwafor Orizu, Without Bitterness (New York: Creative Age Press, 1944) p. 228.

against England, but that it is in their tradition never to suppress a genuine opinion of an under-dog.

On January 6, 1941, President Roosevelt addressed the U.S. Congress. There he declared the philosophy of democracies and for which all peoples of the world were fighting:

> "In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward for a world founded upon the four human freedoms: The first is freedom of speech everywhere in the world.
>
> The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way – everywhere in the world.
>
> The third is freedom from want which, translated into world terms, means economic understanding which will secure to every nation a healthy, peaceful life for its inhabitants – everywhere in the world.
>
> The fourth is freedom from fear – which translated into world term, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of aggression against any neighbour – anywhere in the world."

I did not know how those immortal words sounded in the ears of the rest of the world, or how the peoples of Africa at home understood them, but inside America they were seriously accepted not as a mere philosophical effusion. People lived and acted those freedoms. It shook the fundamental attitude of Americans South of Mason and Dixon lines towards the African Americans. Translated into action, those words sounded like another Appomattox, where Roosevelt was acting the Ulysses Grant, while Senator Bilbo and his group acted Robert E. Lee. But Appomattox surrender was a conclusion of a civil war in 1865. But in 1941, it was a war of global conviction based on the ideology of universal freedom against barbarism, slavery and decadence which was universally headed by Hitler.

The wave of those convictions affected us the African students so forcibly as never before. We carefully followed and studied the terms of several conferences held during the war, beginning with the Atlantic Charter of August, 1941; then the Casablanca Conference

of October 1943; the Cairo Conference of November 1943; then the Teheran Conference of November 1943; the Dumbarton Oaks Conference of October 1944; and the Yalta Conference of February 1945, until the birth of the United Nations in San Francisco on April 25, 1945.

The one great question uppermost in our mind was this: Where was Africa's place to be after the war?

Since we were a willing partner of the Allies, were we to go empty-handed at the close of the hostility while other countries of the world gained freedom and national prestige? Were we to remain what Churchill described as what the British "Have," which they would hold"? For how long were we going to be held? We cabled all the war lords including Churchill about our resentment for Churchill's colonial attitude and his interpretation of the Atlantic Charter. Roosevelt said that Atlantic Charter applied to all the nations and races. Churchill said it applied only to white, non-colonial races, because he had not become the first kings minister "inorder to preside *over the liquidation of the British Empire.*"

We intensified our propaganda in America showing that Africa could govern itself. Our activities were known in the Colonial Office in London. They branded Nkrumah a communist. Dr. Jessie Jones, Chairman of the Phelps-Stokes Fund branded most of us "irresponsible" because we disagreed with the spirit and letter of the findings and recommendations of the Committee on Africa, the war, and Peace Aims – Phelps-Stokes Fund,[3] which told the Americans that Africa was not fit to rule itself and that colonial powers should be allowed to continue their political examinations for African countries with a view "*to promoting each country gradually.*"

What annoyed us was that this committee arrogated to itself the right of expressing what they called American point of view of the Atlantic Charter in regard to Africa. To this was added a more annoying insinuation that we were not authentic Africans, and therefore not representative of African peoples' opinion. We

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3 Nwafor Orizu Without Bitterness, pp 228–233.

wondered what that meant. But the mere fact that our originality was ever questioned by Dr. Jessie Jones and those who listened to him, cemented my determination to write an authoritative book on Africa. How I succeeded to write *Without Bitterness* I shall discuss later.

Apart from fighting imperialism, I think that one of the most advantageous things about the African Students Association of U.S. and Canada, was that it afforded us an opportunity to know each other. Africa is an enormous continent. There were in America, students from the western, eastern, northern and southern sections of Africa. The Association afforded us an opportunity for intimate appreciation of each other's problems, ambitions and future plans. It was here that I learned through constant group discussions among ourselves how identical the problem confronting all Africa was. There was something called African in culture and outlook. For example, Dr. Prince Akiki Nyabongo or Dr. Ernest Kalibala from East Africa enjoyed "foo foo chop" with the same eagerness as a Sierra-Leonian, a Gold Coastan (Ghanaian) or a Nigerian. "Foo foo" is one diet that is universally and exclusively African. West Indians in New York who had not lost all their African culture ate "foo foo" only in a slightly different way.

We also learned how to lead and to follow. Our regulations were strictly observed, and our officers were allowed to order us around. This aspect was essential, because no one could lead who could not follow. In far off America a Sierra-Leonian was just as close to a Tanganyikan as a brother.

After the organizational difficulties were overcome, difficulty of another kind presented itself. This had to do with the political strategy to adopt in restoring sovereignty to African countries. Two conflicting schools emerged. I shall call them inside-out and outside-in political methods. I led the inside-out school, while Nkrumah headed the out-side-in group. I coined the concept of "inside-out" to refer to the policy of seeking African unity through the voluntary co-operation of independent African States. The opposite concept of "outside-in" expressed the policy of achieving African integration at once from unorganized African territories united under one

government in Africa. It was a direct legacy of Marcus Garvey's dream of creating an African government of which he would be the President. Nkrumah had that Marcus Garvey dream. Besides, being bitter with imperialism practised by democratic countries, he appeared to be communist inclined, which in my opinion, was not going to be a fertile ground for the founding fathers of the New Africa to plough.

We had enough jobs on our hands than to enter into ideological warfare of Europe and America.

I disagreed with all these points of view. I stated that:

"The problem of independence must be settled by each country for itself; but after that stage, West Africa as a whole can have a voluntary federation. This is the procedure which I have termed the inside-out plan. This plan calls first for a strong Gold Coast, a strong Gambia and so on, before there is a final approach to the federation of the subcontinent of West Africa. I prefer the inside-out plan for several reasons:

1. There cannot be a strong Federated States of West Africa unless there are first strong, free West African States, each an independent country within and without. Only then can there be effected a voluntary union of co-equals. So will it be in East African Bloc, North African Bloc and South African Bloc.
2. For any Federation to be natural and permanent the uniting powers must be free and equal, at least in law, so that their union is not directed by any supper power from the outside-for the ultimate benefit of the latter. Any Union of West Africa set up under European domination will be a matter of masters uniting slaves in such a way that unity will render the slaves incapable of a concentrated resistance. Such a procedure will only lead to continued turbulence and internal conflict.
3. By uniting West Africa, now under the leadership of Great Britain, another potential Indian problem will have been created. There will be a multiplicity and complexity in

the problems of the various kings – in their counter-claims on the one hand, in turn leading to an unsuitable ideological and purely political debacle among the elite of West Africa on the other. The elite will consume their useful energies on who will represent whom, or how many Sierra-Leonians will be in the Senate and how many Nigerians; or whether the Ashantis will lead the Ibos or whether the capital should be in Liberia ad infinitum. The British in their usual way will appeal to the pride of the factions, emphasize their importance, and show the world that West Africa cannot be granted self-government unless all have agreed among themselves. Nor are the British going to minimize the importance of little differences. If the constitution of West Africa is presented by the British, any small or large section of the whole area can give the British enough reason to withdraw the question of Independence. And we know that there must be differences and strong objections from each of these states – but such differences as could be handled if the countries were free and understood the necessity for unity and federation themselves.

4. If one remembers that the people of India, who were practically under one central government, find it impossible to accept a constitution from the British – even at the price of delaying their national independence – one can easily understand how the West African Countries – which have been ruled by separate alien governments – would find it difficult to unite over-night under one flag and one constitution. Federation sounds plausible and patriotic. It is also a future possibility. But it is an illusion for our immediate political strategy in 1943. The method and detailed plans for these countries are matters of internal concern. I have already treated Nigeria in some detail. West Africa will be the first testing ground for the British idea of freedom in Africa. As we saw it, there would be no need for open conflict. The people of West Africa are willing to forget and forgive the past, if the British are

ready to repent the imperialism of that past. French West Africa must also be let alone to develop on an independent basis – while maintaining friendly relations with the French and with other nations. West African Independence is essential to peace – an enduring peace. This is practically true of America when one considers the proximity of this area to the new world. West African independence is essential to peace because it will be a true demonstration that this war was not fought in vain, or for the white race alone to get freedom. West African independence is essential to peace because its continued subordinate status may rest in a new type of international debacle. Soon after the war it could form a nucleus of all kinds of counter diplomatic battles between powers with different social ideologies. If England begins well in West Africa – without imprisoning the national aspirants, without physical threats, without intimidation, the British goal in Africa will be attained without bitterness or loss of life, and all shall be benefited."[4]

I believe that exactly what I wrote in 1943 still held true in 1957 when Nkrumah himself fought only for independence of Ghana, while he expected other West African territories to fight their own battles for themselves, before free and co-equal states would be united in a large political bloc. That did not in any way indicate that those of us who were more realistic, loved West African unity less. Our subsequent contributions, one way or the other to the progress of those West African territories even in a little way, spoke for themselves for the informed. This cleavage continued to engage our minds in the process of the struggle for freedom. Interestingly, this episode anticipated the conflict on a wide continental area. About seventeen years afterwards, Nkrumah resurrected his "outside-in" strategy for building a supranational body embracing all African States.

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4 Without Bitterness, pp. 238–240.

In 1961, leaders of some independent states of United Arab Republic, Guinea, Mali, and Libya met in Casablanca. The Algerian nationalists were also represented. At the end of the conference, the King of Morocco, and Presidents Nasser, Toure, Kaita and Nkrumah signed to associate themselves with this Charter. This Charter called for an African Consultative Assembly, equipped with all the paraphernalia of a sovereign entity, including a joint African High Command. In 1962, a counter bloc who believed in my "Inside-out" philosophy, the Monrovia Group, comprising Nigeria and other independent countries, was formed. This group believed that Africa could be united through gradual means and by functional co-operation among sovereign states. Members of this group disagreed with the notion of "Outside-in" philosophy, that is the formation of a single African Government at once and believed instead in a process of effective, practical and functional approach to African unity. And this was the forerunner of The Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.) at present.

There was one thing peculiar to American educational spirit to which every good American scholar was susceptible. It was a spirit of violent self-expression closely coupled with broadmindedness, mutual respect and tolerance. It was this spirit that made the memories of our student days in America one of the most pleasant reminiscences on our rough road toward freedom. The unity we exhibited, the common front we maintained, the self-respect we had for each other, the personal confidence that grew, the bond of friendship and love that continued to this day as we see our dreams materializing in the nooks and corners of the continent, constitute a pointer that there is a continental destiny awaiting our Africa of tomorrow.

But let us not forget that I was in New York City for schooling, Students' activities did not exonerate me from my courses of study at Columbia graduate school. Rather, as my academic career deepened, I became more and more restive about the issue of freedom. I have also mentioned that certain experiences in New York aggravated my long-cherished idea to write a book. And New York City was a right place for book-writing. Libraries, personal contact,

proximity to Washington for the use of Library of Congress and personal contact with national and international personalities – with all these – a favourable stage was set for me.

One thing called for another. Simultaneous with my plan for a book, was also my desire to find a solution to get many Africans to America for higher education as I had resolved before leaving the Ohio State University. How I tackled these three problems, the founding of the American Council on African Education, the writing of my first book, *Without Bitterness,* and obtaining my graduate degree in the Department of Public Law, and Government of Columbia almost simultaneously, is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter Sixteen

FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

I decided to test America's spirit of democracy as I use to hear them drum it into my ears everyday. I said to myself, let me go and appeal to the American government, American educational institutions and other citizens and see whether they would co-operate with my educational program or have the same opinion about African freedom as their white brothers in Europe.

– Nwafor Orizu.

I have mentioned how I was originally inspired to write a book while yet in the Ohio State University. At Columbia, I discarded most of the materials I had planned to use for the book, and made a new and broader research. I looked for those Americans in New York who had sympathy for colonial countries.

One of the most outstanding prophets of international and inter-racial love was Miss Pearl Buck. She was famous for being a literary genius, but she was better known to us Africans as one of the emancipators of mankind in the United States. Her forthrightness on the issue of Indian Freedom through East and West Association, her several writings including *"What America Means to Me,"* made her position extraordinarily outstanding in the eyes of Asia and Africa. We, the African students took notice of this.

As soon as I wrote several chapters of my book, I decided to present the manuscript to Pearl Buck for publication by John Day Company where she had a great influence. When I communicated with her, I discovered something that was not common in Africa. I wrote her as Miss Pearl Buck, but in her reply, she signed her

name as Mrs. Richard Walsh with *Miss Pearl Buck* in brackets. I got confused. I did not know that this famous lady was married to anyone, and yet going with title "Miss". Here again, the American idea of freedom spoke with clarity. With all her fame and activities, with all her Nobel Prize, Miss Buck was a loyal, down-to-earth house wife with children. And her wonderful husband Richard Walsh stood behind the scene, singing the song of a satisfied boss.

Miss Buck and Mr. Walsh went through my manuscript and surprised me with the care and tenderness with which they approached the African problem. First, they welcomed the idea of a book coming from an indigenous African author. Second, they expressed a great desire to encourage African authors, to enable them present African point of view to the World at War. I had conference with both Mr. and Mrs. Walsh in their office. Miss Buck told me that she preferred a book based on cultural and human approach than an out-right political writing such as I presented. She wondered if I could change the theme of the book and make it an autobiographical writing in which I could present the life in Africa through the story of my own life and my father's palace.

I was unable to satisfy the conditions of Miss Buck. I felt that I had actually done nothing that was worthwhile for Africa or Nigeria to warrant my writing about my life for others to read. Merely obtaining a University degree (even under serious handicaps) was not to me a spectacular achievement nor a passport to greatness. It was a mere preparation for a great duty which I felt had not yet been performed. I was too eager to present African point of view regarding political freedom. The vacuum was there. There was not a single serious book with an academic and authentic outlook written by an indigenous African since the outbreak of the hostility which became the World War II. Newspapers in a few African countries did present their views, but they were under crushing control of the colonial powers. And where they were not controlled, they had no World Circulation inorder to have a global meaning.

"Why," I asked myself, "must I then tell any other story to Americans other than a political story, but in their own language and in their own logic inorder to show that although the African

had grasped the political concepts of the Western civilization, yet, he wanted to retain some of his own political institutions with his own ethical standards. He needed freedom to reconstruct his culture from the debris of the silent colonial war."

In a letter to me, Miss Buck was kindly disposed. I was happy when she remarked, in a way of encouragement that she hoped she could be of help in the future, when I shall have decided to write in terms of her suggestions. And I was flattered when she further stated that it appeared that I could do for Africa what Lin Yu Tang did for China.

It must be remembered that I have mentioned Dr. Lin Yu Tang as someone whose writings on his China made a compelling appeal to me. The remark made by Miss Buck was therefore a confirmation of that inspiration.

The Columbia University Book Store had a credit system where by an approved student could purchase books and pay instalmentally. This system helped me purchase a good number of books a week. By the time I left New York City I was in possession of over two thousand volumes. I had bought hundreds of books from Long Book Store attached to the Ohio State University in my undergraduate days in Columbus, and I was also a member of the Book-of-the Month Club, and used to purchase books from other book stores in New York City, particularly from Barnes and Nobles and from other well-known book publishing houses.

Right from the Ohio State, I discovered that if a student could afford to forget going to the movies and night clubs and avoided participating in expensive past times and luxuries he could save those little nickles and dimes to build a library for himself. I did not believe that students who were American citizens needed such economy. They could always have their libraries and reference books provided for them. But for an African pioneer, who looked forward to departing from America soon or late to establish and help reconstruct Africa, it was, in my opinion, imperative to purchase some select books.

At the Columbia University Book Store was a Jewish Lady book seller. She had taken cognisance of the fact that I used to purchase books very regularly. For months she watched me and was

wondering what I was doing with those books. Ordinarily, students only purchased class-room text books, but I did not confine myself to the subjects of Political Science, I bought any good book on any subject which I thought would help me understand contemporary civilization and its back ground, and which I felt would be needed when I returned to Africa.

One day, this lady after helping me select some books, asked:

Q: "Where do you come from?"
Ans: "I am a Nigerian."
Q: "Why do you buy so many books every week, as if you need all for your school work?"
Ans: "I am writing a book and needed books to be in my possession."
Q: "In what department do you register?"
Ans: "Public Law and Government."
Q: "How did you get time to write a book while studying for your graduate degree in Public Law?"
Ans: "I make time."

It was now time for another class. I begged her leave and rushed to the Fay Weather Hall for my class in Public Administration.

The following week, I went to the Vasity Book Store again. I was looking for some volumes of the *Contemporary Civilization Source Book*, with particular reference to the volume dealing with Joseph Stalin and *"The New Soviet Constitution* of 1936;" *"The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism"* by Benito Mussolini, and *"Hitler's Speech to the German Workers"* on December 10, 1940 I met the same lady again. She reopened our conversation:

Q: "Please will you tell me what kind of book you are writing. I mean what is your topic?"
Ans: "I am just writing something about Africa."
Q: "What about Africa – a legend, a novel or what?"
Ans: "About Political Freedom."
Q: "I guessed so, but who is going to publish it for you?"
Ans: "I don't know who would publish the book for me."

In a very low tone of voice and with a friendly look of genuine interest, the lady said: "Well, youngman, you may not know it, but we have been watching you since the year, how you use to come to this bookstore and buy books with seriousness and regularity which make us feel that you are a "go-getter" and could "go places" in the World. But I am afraid that your hopes may not be fulfilled because you may not find a reputable publishing house to accept your manuscript on Africa, unless you write on trivialities about your people. You look too serious to be a type who would write an acceptable book to our commercially-minded publishers.

I am really interested in your problems because I belong to an oppressed people. I am a Jew."

I did not attach much importance to what she said. To me, she was an intruder into my private affair, but I managed to hide that feeling. I cannot now remember exactly what I mumbled to her, however, it was to the effect that I was not yet ready to look for publishers. When I was about going away, she said: "Do you mind having lunch with me next Thursday?" I said "I don't mind."

It was at one of the restaurants on the Broadway near the book store. There she apologised that she could not invite me to her home until such a time her husband would be present, to enable me meet him. At that time she introduced herself as Mrs. Shlan (known as Miss Lewis at the bookstore). She then told me that she was determined to find a publishing house for me as soon as possible. I was unable to understand all this. I was ignorant of what it meant for a young author to get his first manuscript accepted in New York City where competition was so keen. I therefore minimized the need for searching for a publishing house, even though I knew that I did not succeed with Pearl Buck of John Day Publishing House. Besides, I did not imagine that Mrs. Shlan could help me. I was unaware that I was talking to a lady who knew people around town and whose commendation could mean a lot to any young author. I had that air: "that nothing was impossible."

When a youngman with ambition had gone through life with a steady and upward curve of conquest he could hardly appreciate any dangers on the path to his progress until something hits him

very hard on the head, and sets him back several times, before he resumes his onward march. Thanks to the psychological maturity and humanitarianism of Mrs. Shlan.

Soon after the lunch she had to rush back to the store, while I went back to library in the Theological Seminary: Sincerely, I did not take the matter seriously. My idea was to go on with my studies, while also writing the book gradually without any particular hurry.

In the meantime, I considered it necessary to write and ascertain from Dr. Bevis, the President of the Ohio State University, how many African Students he was prepared to grant the scholarship and the nature of the scholarship. He replied as follows:

March 26, 1943.

Mr. A. A. N. Orizu,
Department of Public Law and Government,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Sir,

I am very happy to have your letter of March 18, and to know that you still feel friendly to the Ohio State University. We are very happy to have you on our campus and to have established through you relations with your people. As I remember, I assured you that we would be willing to grant tuition scholarships to students from your country should any care to come to us.

You inquire in your letter as to the number: I should be willing to take care of any number up to ten at one time. ....

Yours sincerely,

Signed: Howard L. Bevis,
President.

Few weeks after, six scholarship offers were obtained from our friend Dr. Charles Welsley of the Wilberforce University. It was exciting to have sixteen scholarships in my hand while still studying for my M.A. degree.

It will be remembered that it was my original dream to build an Nnewi State College in Nnewi under the auspices of the Nnewi Patriotic Association (NPA). That of course was the origin of obtaining Masters Degree scholarship for Okongwu at Columbia University as stated in the preceding chapter. I decided to awaken the NPA to sponsor eight or twelve students to benefit out of the sixteen scholarships from the Ohio State and Wilberforce Universities both in the state of Ohio. That would mean the selection of two or three students from each of the four quarters of Nnewi namely Otolo, Uruagu, Umudim and Nnewichi. I requested specially that Christopher Mojekwu and Michael Ajuluchukwu[1] must be included under special condition. I had had several correspondence with these two young men all along. Apart from being my personal friends, I believed that they were good materials for building an intellectual future of Nnewi. I was informed that the N.P.A. was not in the mood to grant scholarships to Nnewi youths because those whom they sponsored at Umuahia College did not co-operate with the Association. I was not sure that this information was correct, but the response of the association was not clear. I made up my mind to add to my scheme of work, the planning of scholarship programmes without further delay. To this I wanted to give more time than book-writing. I decided to go back to Columbus to see Dr. Bevis in order to tell him of my idea to turn what was so far a personal matter into a social programme. I needed his advise and further co-operation.

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1 When Mojekwu was unable to proceed to America under the scholarship, he came down to Lagos in the process of his further attempt for further studies, taught in a methodist college, Lagos for a while, till a fruitful plan matured from Kano for him to study law in London during the second world war. In looking for a room as a law student in London in 1945, C. C. Mojekwu in his letter to me dated August 25, 1945, related the story of his ordeal (read page 181 of my book 'Africa Speaks' – "An African Student in England Meets British Civilization") Despite his ordeal, I was happy he was studying Law in England. When I returned to Nigeria, M. C. K. Ajuluchukwu as above mentioned, was first offered A.C.A.E. scholarship to Brooklyn College, N.Y.

My first missionary journey in America began on September 29, 1943, when I travelled from New York City to the Ohio State University in Columbus Ohio to see the President of my Alma-mater, Dr. Howard L. Bevis for advice. I put my programme before him and added that I needed more number of scholarships from other American Universities to start the kind of plan I had in mind. I did not know the Presidents of other Universities. My desire was that a letter of introduction should come from Dr. Bevis himself to each of the Presidents whom I wanted to visit. I shall then travel at my own expense to those universities. By that time, most of those universities' authorities had never heard the name Nigeria mentioned, much more to know of those who lived in it, and to them, the word "Africa" was a mirage. After all, I was the first indigenous African to register with the Ohio State University up to that date and I was not aware of any indigenous African in any mid-western and western college of the U.S.A. apart from Rev. John Kareffa-Smart of Sierra Leone. Now, I felt it my God-given duty to introduce my Africa wherever I was able to reach in that new world, all my limitations in time and resources notwithstanding.

Dr. Bevis replied: "If my letter of introduction will be of any help to you, I shall be happy to write. Give my secretary the names of the Presidents you wanted me to write, and wait for a while to take the letters with you." The letter, dated September 29, 1943, read as follows:

Dear President ....

This will introduce to you Mr. A. A. Nwafor Orizu .... He has been studying in the United States for several years and graduated with the degree of B.A. from the Ohio State University in August, 1942. He has certain plans for the education of his people which he would like to discuss with you. Your courtesy to him will be personally appreciated.

Sincerely yours,
Signed: Howard L. Bevis,
President, Ohio State University.

The same letter was addressed to fifteen important universities presidents whom I selected for interview with bias for mid-western universities. With these letters, I went back to New York City by air since I had to reach home to work on my university assignments and to prepare for Sunday meetings of the African students, and also comply with my schedules for research and writing of my manuscript. I used a part of my meagre savings for this Ohio trip. On my arrival at the International House in New York, things were so crowded that my only leisure was by listening to my small radio. Thanks to many radio networks and their numerous stations competing freely over the air to satisfy the need of every listener.

They came with variety of sweet music and songs which kept my soul together in the loneliness of late hours of the night and during the early mornings.

I kept all the letters of introduction from Dr. Bevis confidential. It meant that I had to visit such states as Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa, Pennsylvania and Illinois etc inorder to meet each of those Presidents.

I found that American University Presidents were busy bees. I had to write to all of them for appointments. I had to buy the stationery and the stamps, and do the typing myself. I printed a letter head with the International House and Columbia as my address. I had no source of income for these purposes and there was no time for me to put in for money-earning jobs as I did at the Ohio State. When their replies came, I found myself in a most awkward position. For example, Western Reserve University and Wilberforce University were both situated in Cleveland and Xenia in Ohio State. President Leutner of Western Reserve gave me an appointment on a different date from Dr. Charlse Wesley of Wilberforce. It meant that failing to get those two men to conform to one date, I had to travel from New York to Ohio twice. African question in the United States of those days could not be solved by letter writing. It would be the highest folly for me to state my case in writing without preliminary personal talk The trips themselves were a gamble. I might use my last cent, deprive myself of my meal, or purchasing books, or of

paying some weeks rent, or even borrow from someone inorder to finance those visits, and may come out without any success.

Furthermore, unless I travelled by air as I said before, it would be impossible for me to travel to places some of which were hundreds of miles away. It was my policy not to miss classes. It dealt a deadly blow to a student to miss classes. In a place like Columbia, omission of one class was irreparable because being under a semester system, a lot was delivered during one lecture in form of discussions, assignments and collaterals. Having surveyed these things I was forced to suspend any immediate visit to the university presidents. I was happy that nobody knew of the proposition. For a while, I was rather frustrated.

I turned back to my school work and the writing of my book (*Without Bitterness*). But my mind was not quiet. I could not control the constant inner urge to leave every thing and attend to the African education plan I had in hand. This inner urge was growing everyday. The date of the letters of introduction might go stale. I reached to a point where nothing mattered anymore except this plan. I nearly abandoned my school work, for I continued to say to myself: "What is my M.A. degree for if I am unable to pave way for other Africans to come to America and see what I saw?"

A mind so preoccupied would be incapable of a first class output in other engagements except that one which stood paramount before it. I managed to keep all these conflicting ideas to myself. I discussed it with nobody, but I kept on praying, and soliloquying in a discuss with what I called "God of Africa."

One day, I got a registered special delivery letter at the International House. The letter came from Mrs. Eileen J. Garrett, the owner of the Creative Age Press, at 11 East 44th Street. She wrote to say that Miss Lewis had informed her publishing house that I had an interesting manuscript which they would like to see.

On the appointed day, I went to 11 East 44th Street on 10th floor. Mrs. Garrett received me most warmly. Immediately I came into her office, she asked me for the manuscript. I handed over the incomplete manuscript. The title of the book was not yet known to me. She just glanced through the chapters, reclined in her chair and

shut her eyes. Then after about a minute, she opened her eyes, stretched out her hand across her table to me, shook my hand firmly saying as she held my hand "you have arrived, you have arrived, you have arrived, you are a fine young man. You will be a tremendous success in life and we shall help you here. We now accept your manuscript. We shall publish the book for you. The contract will be prepared by Mr. William Martin our business manager with our lawyer. Mr. Martin will see to that." She sent for Mr. Charles P. Chadsey, the book editor to whom she handed over the chapters to start reading before I finished the rest of the work. "When the contract is signed, we shall pay you an agreed amount as advance," she said.

I paused in astonishment for a while. "How can this be?" I asked myself. Mrs. Garrett never saw me before. She had not read the manuscript well in order to know really what I had written. I had never written a book before in order to convince her that I knew what I was doing or assure a reasonable market for my work. Could it be just because Miss Lewis recommended me that brought about this extraordinary interest? Whatever it was, my arrival to this goal took me by surprise.

When Mr. Chadsey went back to his office with my manuscript, Mrs. Garrett told me that she expected me to finish the rest of the work in a week or two that the entire work must be with the book editor before an intelligent editing could be made. I did not hesitate to tell her that although I was very happy for their acceptance of my work, but I could not finish the writing urgently. I planned to devote only a very small portion of my time to it while I concentrated on my college work and the work of finding a way to getting African Youths to study in America.

She said: "Oh, no" and clasped her hands solemnly, and then continued: "the book must be published coming spring and we cannot afford to wait too long. We shall even have to postpone the publication of some other books in order to get to work on this. You must co-operate. If you have any financial problems, we shall fix you up." I interrupted: "But I cannot stop studying for my M.A. degree. My people at home will be very much disappointed. Besides, I must continue to get the scholarships I had in mind for African youngsters.

To get those scholarships, I have to travel to several states in the union. The reason why I had postponed my tour was financial, and my mind cannot simply settle to write this book unless the issue of my scholarship scheme is properly resolved."

Mrs. Garrett smiled and looked right straight into my face with her eyes somewhat half closed, and as if in a trance (Mrs. Garrett was one of the World's known Mediums), and in a few seconds, she opened her eyes and said to me: "Your plans are wonderful and a youngman like you must be encouraged. My friend Miss Lewis and I have discussed you a lot. She seemed to be much impressed with your seriousness of purpose coupled with honest labour. My meeting you has more than confirmed what Miss Lewis said. If you can find out how much it will cost you to visit all the University Presidents you had in mind so that you deal with your scholarship matter and return and settle your mind to write the book, come back and let us know. You should hasten this time, not slowly."

I left Mrs. Garrett's office for the International House. I joined Number Three Fifth Avenue double deck bus. I went to the upper, open deck and sat down alone at one end, thinking. Complications were mounting up in my life daily, and I did not know which way to go. The demand on my time seemed incredible. University assignments were expanding daily. The requirements of each professor were as serious and definite as the other. I was not aiming at passing my examinations. I wanted to be thorough in my studies and also acquaint myself with all details of all collateral readings. The whole graduate requirements were indeed intended to occupy the entire time of a studious student for one academic year and perhaps over.

What I considered the least of all my programs the writing of a book – has now forced itself unwelcomingly but irresistibly upon me. I asked myself: "What shall I do?" It was one of those opportunities that comes once. "Shall I quit Columbia?" "Shall I quit Scholarship Plans?" "Shall I resign from the students organization, and also minimize my activities at the International House?" I felt that I was in the midst of an ocean of confusion. I knew that indecision was one of the signs of weakness in a man.

I wanted to settle these inner and now outer conflicts once and for all. I could not eat my dinner. I went to bed and with my back on the bed, facing the ceiling, all night thinking.

It was not one of those issues which I needed anyone to help me decide. The problems that confronted me were ones that called for my spiritual resources and God's Guidance. Any wrong step taken in the course of this upward trend may take revenge in unsuspected ways in the future. I would not like to have anyone to blame, nor depend upon another to arrive at a life-time decision. I knew that all these matters were self-imposed. Nobody in the world suggested the question of scholarship for Africans to me. None lured me into book writing nor did I get advise from anyone to devote my time to the service of organization of African Students in America. My original obligation known to my people and myself was to get my own education like everyone else. By morning, I was not yet certain as to what to do. I know that even Professor Nathaniel Peffer under whom I was taking a course on Imperialism and who was in-charge of my thesis was very displeased with me when he discovered that I was engaged in book-writing, and scholarship plan at the same time. I knew he was right. His argument was that I needed a full time devotion to my class work. Little did he realize my peculiar situation. By my grade in my class work under him, he ought to have known that I did not permit any other activity to prevent my full attention to academic pursuit. I might have been straining myself but I did not overlook my class work. I never missed a class nor failed to read up my assignments and the required collaterals. As a matter of fact, most of the books I bought on the side were those recommended for collateral reading. I was laying foundation for my doctorate degree in Political Science.

The decision came. First, I must get my M.A. degree. I shall concentrate on getting all my required point-hours, and take my time to write the thesis. No need finishing the thesis in that same academic year when I should have completed my class work requirements. Second, I must not allow the opportunity created by Dr. Bevis to go. If I failed to interview the presidents to whom he had written, it would be very difficult to start my scholarship plan by any other

method later. Third, I must comply with my publishers' demand in order to earn money to travel to many states for the scholarship plan, and pay some debts already incurred on that account. If my book will yield fund for me to start my scholarship program, it is a needed service to Africa. Further, I must tell my African colleagues of my intention to resign from active participation in our organization, and request them to elect someone else to that office. To this my last decision, my fellow African colleagues objected vehemently. Some of them held that I had no "Business" excusing myself from my duty. "Everyone", they said "has his own private responsibilities." Some of them even said they were writing books.

Having made up my mind, it became necessary for me to arrange my time in order to be able to accomplish what I set before me. I was filled with unquenchable enthusiasm. I buried myself in the libraries which I had access to anywhere in New York City. Thanks to invaluable co-operation offered to me by the libraries in helping me get books relating to Africa. Thanks to University Professors who spared nothing to encourage me in getting whatever facts from whatever sources anywhere in the United States. Ironically, facts about Africa were easier to obtain in the United States than in Africa itself. As a matter of fact, colonial subjects knew nothing that really mattered about themselves, particularly of those facts connected with nation-building. In writing *Without Bitterness*, I was influenced partly by some eminent writers such as George Sorel, Niccolo Machiavelli, Pandit Nehru, Plato, Henry George, William James, Harold J. Laski, Prince Tito of Japan and Thomas Jefferson. But the prime factor and compelling influence was my African background. Such things as the Italo-Ethiopian war in which Mussolini forced the Emperor of Ethiopia out of his kingdom was a burning question in my mind. I was not happy about Chinese modern history before 1911, and I admired Japanese industrial pace. Indian politics attracted me because Gandhi and Nehru were such two uncompromising opposites who, through wisdom and altruism allowed themselves to be harmonised by the common struggle to make India free. Nehru's approach to Gandhi's "Paradoxes" as he called it, was a masterpiece of political sagacity which every leader or every follower should comprehend.

The spiritual element in India's approach to her fight against imperialism was a great influence in my thinking. I considered Gandhi every thing that John Gunther called him. "A Jesus Christ, your mother and Tammany Hall."

I included *Zikism* as a philosophy in order to isolate an African personality and give him a deified position such as Nehru and others foreshadowed in the person of Mahatma Gandhi – the battle to change an old order into a new dream. Common sense shows that without faith in someone, no people can rise to a respectable height. America had faith in Washington and referred to his saying as that of an oracle. The English attached herself to the legend of Alfred the Great. The Russians considered the writing of Lenin as a new Bible. Must Africa remain faithless and completely without spiritual anchorage while engaged in her new battle for freedom?

On the other hand, the writing of *Without Bitterness* fertilized the ground upon which the seed of the American Council on African Education germinated and grew.

So determined, so encouraged, I went back to Mrs. Garrett. I told her that I had to travel to at least eight different states in different days in order to see the College Presidents; that after my interview with the Presidents I would be willing to concentrate on my manuscript as she required; that the contract could now be signed between the Creative Age Press and me; that I needed an initial "royalty" advance from the publishers to clear my financial entanglements for scholarship scheme in order that I could write with a free mind.

Mr. William had already prepared the contract. It was a formal thing with them. I took it back with me to study.

After some minor adjustment, we signed it. I got a cheque as the first advance.

With the cheque for $500.00 I went home proudly but humbly. That cheque constituted the highest amount of money I ever earned at one time in my life. I was most eager to apply it to supplement the expenses of my first missionary journey for African education in this country which started formally on September 29, 1943. I

thanked God for the opportunity He afforded me to earn money for this program.

I did not find it easy to introduce Nigeria and Africa in general to the Americans of 1943. Most of the University Presidents did not know where Nigeria was. My appeal was presented in a form of convincing discussions. I told the story of the eight Nigerian argonauts – how Aggrey and Azikiwe introduced the idea of American Education into Africa, and how we followed their example, and like ancient argonauts have captured the Golden Fleece.

The fleece of the wondrous ram was comparable to "American education" which alone could transform the oppressed people from colonial slavery into sovereign states. Then I turned to the American war of independence for an analogy. It was rather easy for any American to understand the problem of colonial peoples as soon as the example of 1776 was focussed. Nigeria, I made clear was potentially rich but the natural resources were untapped because of the chains of ignorance around our necks. Little wonder then the Nigerians as a whole appeared poor, and unless American Colleges were prepared to co-operate with Africa through scholarship grant, we were doomed for ever. I pointed out that the Chinese youngsters were able to go through American Colleges because of the Boxer Indemnity. Students from other countries were supported by their governments through public revenue. But African students in America at that time were left to their own devices. That was unfortunate because the standard of living in America was unimaginably high for the Africans. It made American Education almost prohibitively expensive. It was therefore impossible to have African students in America in large numbers unless some kind of organized co-operation comes from the U.S. Colleges.

The American educators wanted to know the standard of high school qualification obtainable in Nigeria. I explained that in full, in order to assure them that the highest class in an approved Nigerian Secondary School was equivalent to Senior Cambridge or School Leaving Certificate which qualifies a student to register with the Cambridge, London or Oxford University. They wanted to know about the Nigerian Embassy in Washington. That again raised an

important issue. Those presidents and most other Americans could not imagine a nation without a consulate or an ambassadorial office in Washington. I promptly reminded them that I became an advocate of American education because without introduction of democratic education in Africa we could never send official ambassadors to Washington, Nigeria was a protectorate within the British Empire. We had no international identity. I pointed out that I was not asking Americans to give us "Independence," all I wanted was American education for the Africans, and we shall do the job ourselves.

I often added that uneducated masses make neither good producers nor good consumers. Americans lost tremendous market in Africa because the masses there were uneducated. It would be to the best interest of American business and standard of living to help develop Africa through education. If many African boys and girls were encouraged to study in the United States, they would return to Africa with good message about American products and business. Above all, I emphasized my genuine preference for American education. Reason: to me education is a process through which an individual is brought in contact with his environment in order to exploit it for his convenience. The entire earth is man's environment. But an individual is by nature limited to a particular country or continent. English education so far in Africa was set not to bring the African close to the African environment, much more to conquer or utilize its resources.

My study in America made me appreciate African culture and traditions more. There was no tendency to Americanize me. Most of our Nigerian boys who studied in England generally came home practically Anglicized. France plans to denationalize all Africans under them by making them all French men. As many years as Europeans claimed to have educated the Africans, not a single African was taught how to speculate in the gold mines of South Africa or Katanga nor how to utilize the electrical energy latent in great rivers of the continent. We were only taught how to read and write and add figures for European Merchants, and how to be good civil servants and well dressed lawyers. The African citizens (whom the

Europeans preferred to call natives) were directed to ignore the fundamental items of economic and industrial advancement.

I was genuinely convinced that American education tends to do just opposite of what I have described above. By studying in America your attention is constantly drawn to your own personality as a unique factor brought into the world to make a special contribution to human progress.

Earlier, I had a talk with the British Ambassador to Washington in order for me to assess the interest of the British Embassy in African students in the United States. On November 20, 1942, I went to Washington D.C. to visit Lord Halifax, the then British Ambassador to the United States. I left New York City by 8.30 a.m. to be in Washington by 12.15 p.m. Our train was delayed by a freight train for an hour and half, and we arrived Washington by 2.00 p.m. I rushed to the British Embassy in a taxi from the Railroad station for 70 cents. I waited for Lord Halifax. Captain J. Huggins welcomed me and sat with me until the Ambassador was ready. We met Lord Halifax. He was a congenial gentleman. He talked and looked a Christian Knowing of his work in India, I failed to reconcile his quiet naturalness with the austerity and callousness required of an Indian viceroy. We chatted over some political problems, and he refused to call Nigeria a colony – "No", he exclaimed, "we are all now in the British Commonwealth. The idea of "colony" is gone. It is an old philosophy in the British thinking."

I brought the question of African students which was the reason for the meeting. I had two points:

1. The financing of the scholarship program I had in hand.
2. The co-operation of the Embassy with the African Students Association.

Beginning with the second question, Lord Halifax offered his co-operation readily, but added that only colonial government could finance the African students who then were studying in the U.S.A. With the first question of the scholarship scheme, he suggested that there would be no objection to my plans, as he believed, I was going to get one African or two to the United States for studies

every year. I told him that I planned to get no less than one hundred Africans to America every year. It was a continental program. He blushed his face, and the discussion stopped abruptly. After a deep breathing, he said: "Well Prince Orizu, I think that I have to go now, I shall ask Captain Huggins to go into details with you."

Captain Huggins went through the whole thing, and I gathered from him that my plan would not receive their whole-hearted blessing if I had planned to get more than one or two Africans to America every year. I was unable to follow such reasoning. What will it benefit Africa to sponsor a maximum of only two students in the United States every year? I could not understand.

I returned to New York with a heavy spirit and bitter disappointment. I sought the advice of Dr. Emory Ross who had a good deal of experience in matters affecting Africa. He wanted to know the attitude of the British Government in Nigeria towards my proposal. I was unequivocal in telling him that the plan was independent of the colonial government in Nigeria. But I told him of my visit to Washington to consult Lord Halifax. Dr. Ross felt that that was not enough. He stated that it was unwise for me to start such a program without letting them carry out the program themselves. They would make it difficult for me and ultimately destroy the whole program and discredit and crush me even before my people.

I wanted to know from Dr. Ross what I should do, if in seeking the co-operation he suggested, I encounter the same policy of sponsoring only one or two African students every year, as I had already encountered in the British Embassy. Or, suppose I met a complete opposition to the whole idea of introducing American education into Africa on a large scale? Dr. Ross said that he was not unaware of the reasons for the fear I entertained, but concluded that he was only alerting me to the dangers on the road I had chosen to walk across. That was not an effort to discourage me, but an attempt to help me appreciate that he did not think that any colonial government (not just only the British), would permit its subject to establish such a far-reaching organization on an international scope, closing its inner doors to that colonial government, sooner or later, the founder may be victimized. For these reasons Dr. Ross concluded:

"Well Mr. Orizu, I think you have a good idea, but I regret that I shall be unable to become a sponsor at this initial stage." I understood Dr. Ross. But my determination grew stronger. Opposition is a good appetizer to my psychology of progress. The reaction of Lord Halifax and the prediction of Dr. Ross helped me understand the weight and meaning of what I was about to embark upon, but I determined to go on empty-handed, trusting God.

On December 1, 1943, I discussed the program with Mrs. Frances P. Bolton, a Republican Congress Woman from Cleveland, Ohio. In her Washington office, I introduced my scheme of the scholarship. She wanted to know what she could do for me. I made three requests:

1. For her to become a member of the proposed organization,
2. To help get other Congress men and women.
3. To give a financial help.

She confessed that I was the first foreign student from any country with any such program she met, and pledged her interest. She told me that her son, who was then Major Kenyon C. Bolton, was in French Equatorial Africa (Brazaville). She brought out the world map and I showed her the location of Nigeria and indicated the position of Onitsha Province where Nnewi was located.

Mrs. Bolton suggested the names of several prominent members of the Senate and House of Representatives, whom she thought would be helpful. She telephoned the State Department and got me in contact with certain officials including Dr. Charles Thompson, who was Chief of the Cultural Relations in State Department. As for becoming a director of the proposed organization, she asked me to give her time to think of it. On the question of financing the program, she took up her telephone receiver to get Mrs. Walker of Payne Fund in New York City. There was no quick connection, and she put down the receiver and advised me to go to New York to meet Mrs. Walker or Miss Martins at No. 1 Madison Avenue, New York. The Payne Fund was a creation of congress woman Mrs. Bolton herself. Mrs. Bolton later became a member of the Advisory Board of the American Council on African Education.

She believed in cultural relations with Africa. On my recommendation, Mrs. Bolton, through the Payne Fund, offered a $4000.00 scholarship for a Nigerian girl through me. The scholarship at this point was still my own personal affair. I had not formed an organization yet. But this was never utilized because her organization sponsored only female graduates, and this was not possible immediately because African women graduates were not available then. Mrs. Bolton invited me to lunch with her at L'Escagot Restaurant. The same day at 2.00 p.m., I was the guest of Dr. Charlse Thompson of the State Department. I was satisfied with my Washington tour. Back to New York, I planned for a Mid-West trip to Colleges and Universities.

I went to East Lansing, Michigan, to meet Dr. John A. Hannah the President of Michigan State College. There were 9,871 men and 3,411 women students on the campus of this state-controlled land-grant institution. It was started one hundred and one years ago (in 1843) as Michigan Agricultural College. Typical annual expenses there was $1,000.00 per year. President Hannah was an unassuming humanitarian. Quite approachable, he loved to consider matters from many sided angles, and could easily admit where America had failed, but would not spare even a guest from another country where he thought that other peoples had also failed. For example, when I tried to introduce Africa to him, he was quite prepared to admit America's ignorance of Africa. But when I asserted that American Colleges had failed by not introducing courses on Africa in their Colleges, Dr. Hannah reiterated that it was the fault of the Africans who failed to write books on their own countries. He further stated that even where a University President was willing to introduce "African studies," there would be no indigenous African Professors available. Then he challenged me by saying: "I offer you a place in this College to establish for us a department of "African Studies" in your field of specialization if you are prepared to be employed in our College. We shall pay you well."[2]

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2 President Hannah later became the First Vice-Chancellor of University of Nigeria Nsukka on the Initiation of the Eastern Regional Government.

I could not devote anytime to teaching in the United States. He then concluded: "You see, that is the problem we face in this matter – lack of African Professors." I would say no more, and I shall never forget that challenge which was directed to all African intellectuals. I felt that President Hannah was absolutely correct in his logic. Africans must teach Africa to others. We cannot remain isolated from our own affairs and expect others to understand us.

President Hannah took me round the campus. He reminded me again that Michigan College came under Land Grant College System under Morril Act of 1862. He compared his School with others in this order: In Veterinary Medicine his College, Pennsylvania State College and Cornell University were the best; in Home Economics, his School, Cornell University and Iowa State College were in the forefront; in Agriculture, his School, Cornell, Iowa State University and California were the best. The campus had beautiful dormitories for men and women. The women gymnasium was attractive. The Sports field and the gymnasium for men were one of the bests I saw in the country. Behind the stadium stood an array of attractive line of pine-trees. The music building was standing across a Botanical Garden, and I was proud to see the first Agricultural School Building in the World which was now used as Entomology Building. The study of Horticulture was at its best. I explained to him the need for Agricultural Knowledge in Africa, how impossible it was for Africans to finance their education in America without a good deal of co-operation from the American Colleges.

Concerning the scholarship program for which I came, President Hannah was most generous: He offered ten tuition scholarships and six full scholarships covering room, board and tuition. I was a very happy man when I left this Michigan State College. I was informed that it was the oldest Agricultural College in the World, with about 2,600 acres of farm land. My dream about the possibilities of the African farmer of tomorrow received a new impetus. Long had been my yearning to see that a revolutionary change came into Agricultural methods in Africa. I read a good deal of Russian Revolution in Agriculture. I appreciated that in the United States people fed well. Their capacity for hard work coupled with buoyant living was a

result of good feeding. Good feeding comes from scientific production of good food. No nation can become healthy and powerful without mechanized agriculture.

It will be imagined therefore, how encouraged I was for the scholarships offered by President Hannah. The ten tuition scholarships covered an amount of two thousand, nine hundred and ten dollars per year or eleven thousand six hundred and forty dollars for four academic years. The six full scholarships was to the value of six thousand dollars per year or twenty four thousand dollars for four years. The total value of the sixteen scholarships offered for a year was eight thousand nine hundred and ten dollars or thirty-five thousand dollars for a period of four academic years. This value did not include student's transportation from Africa to the United States, his summer and other incidental expenses, nor does it account for the service expenses of the organization to sponsor the program.

By 10.30 a.m. on Tuesday December 14, 1943, I had an interview with the President of the University of Detroit – Reverend Father Cloud S. J. As a Jesuit, Father Cloud was highly interested in foreign countries. The Jesuits were known to be lovers of education in terms of general progress. "European citizens want to come here, why not the Nigerians?" It was a question that answered itself, therefore I gave no answer than to smile.

The dean invited me to his class on "Legal Basis of Education in the United States." While here, Dr. Okechukwu Ikejiani met me. Dr. Ikejiani was yet a student in this University. He did not know that I was visiting the college. When therefore he met me here, he said he was "startled."

He shouted my name in joy. It was a happy reunion for both of us. The dean continued to take me around, now with Ikejiani. We went into the Livestock Pavilion for animal husbandry. There was an extensive college farm. Apples and peaches and other fruits were grown. Research on chicken diseases was intensive here. I was told that the Federal and State Governments gave them half a million dollars for this research. Oddly enough there was a course in Police Administration. I was interested in this because our police in Nigeria

was more feared than respected, more dreaded than befriended. There concept of police function was purely punitive and fault finding. I knew it was the result of lack of professional education. They could be trained to be looked upon as the most useful friends of the citizens as they were known in other more advanced countries. With the Dean we went back to the office of the president. He invited us to his home. I met a few persons there including the Dean of the College. There was a female professor with her baby. She told me that female students were allowed to use her baby to learn how to handle babies. How I wished it were possible for African Education to be made just as practical as this. How many African mothers could allow their babies to be guinea pigs for some young girls in a college?

Now was my time to chat with Ikejiani (O.K.) (as we called him). We went to the Vasity Union for dinner. They had a nice cafeteria like that of the University of Cincinnati. I had dinner for 93 cents. Ikejiani introduced me to an Egyptian student. The Egyptian believed in intercontinental understanding among African countries including Egypt. In my diary I wrote: "Briefly I told him that most dependent countries of Africa have the better chance of independence – economically, and politically than the so called independent Ethiopia, Egypt, Liberia, South Africa. All we need is mutual co-operation." He agreed. Ikejiani mentioned General Smut's idea of Africa where South Africa shall dominate the continent. I told him that the Nigerian press has answered Smut's bluff. In the meantime, Mr. Tow of the University News Service came to me and revealed that he had spread the news of my mission to Michigan to the United and Associated Press and Langston Papers. This was another factor that helped me in spreading Africa and Nigeria all over America. The press and radio were most co-operative in disseminating the news of my education plan.

I was staying in Detroit at Gross Point – in a home of Mr. and Mrs. Page True. Mr. True was an engineer in Ford's Motor establishment. He and his wife were of the Bahai Faith. They believed that Bahaism was an improved Christianity. The religion was founded by Baha'u'llah who was born in Persia in 1817 and died 1892 at Akka Palestine. The central idea of Baha'U teaching is that God is

mystery. We can neither comprehend nor interpret Him. He comes to us by manifesting Himself through prophets. In every age or era a prophet must come to manifest God. This is a continuous process of truth. To Bahais, the latest manifestation was their Baha'U'llah. His charge from God was to unify humanity under a single and under one world government. Universal brotherhood of man under one fatherhood of God was the emphasis of this Order. The believers were particularly anti-racialism and anti-colonialism. Any act of man or nation which negates equality or brotherhood was opposed. And like early Christians, they practised what they preached.

On the night of December 14, 1943, I was in Mr. True's house in Gross Point getting ready to move to another state for my mission the next morning. In my diary I wrote: "My life continues and the turbulence, doubts, courage, and faith persist amid all pervading turns of fate. The success in my scholarship plan is on the up-ward trend. But I have always refused to accept successes with ease and endless expectation of easy times. I always give allowance for any impending tragedy amid all victories. Last night I had no sleep whatsoever, having come from somewhat unsuccessful talk with Mr. Bow of Wayne University, and after suffering the once-upon-a-time race prejudice in a restaurant on Woodward and Canifield Avenue, in downtown Detroit. Here I was very hungry. I ate nothing except a cup of coffee which I had from morning until 8.30 p.m. I had no time in the day to eat because of appointments. I entered into this restaurant on Woodward Avenue. I did not sit down at once. I knew how notorious Detroit was on racial matters. I, therefore walked up to the waiter and asked him for service.

He said: "We have not yet started to serve coloured people. They just do not come over here". The waiter who was waving his hands into the air as he talked, had a big stomach and an ugly wide face. I did what I ought not to have done. I showed him the publication of my mission in "Cincinnati Post", and told him that I just finished having an interview with the representatives of the "Detroit Times" at Statler Hotel. He looked at me startled. By this time I was quite unhappy. I told him about Hotels in Nigeria and how I will see to it that we reciprocate discrimination against American Whites in those

our hotels if they came to Nigeria. He apologised in a long and round about talk. He added that so far as a businessman was concerned, money paid by the Blacks was as good as those paid by the Whites. But White customers resent serving Blacks. I left him quite disappointed by human ignorance, human indignity and lack of fear of God. Although, this incident was not a very unusual thing in America, but the very event of this night affected me deeply. I thought of the war, of the fallacy of race superiority, of human stupidity, of the future of Africa. I thought of Hitler whose racial attitude I hated. I wondered why those Americans who followed his racial theories criticized him.

Then one spirit came to me and said: "What of the other kind of White Americans? What about Howard L. Bevis? What about President Hannah of Michigan State College? What about Pearl Buck? Do you forget Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt? How about Wendell Wilkie? Can you side-track favourable responses from American leaders in Washington and New York? Between physical hunger in Detroit and spiritual satisfaction from good Americans my mind oscillated. It was now late in the evening. I went to the home of Miss Elizabeth Frances where several friends gathered to meet me. I was here for twenty minutes before I left for the home of Mr. Dunlop where I stayed until it was past midnight. I went over to Gross Point at Mr. True's house. All the early morning, I was planning my trip the next day till 4.45 a.m.

Mr. True drove me in his car to the Air Port for 5.02 plane. We missed that plane, and had to wait till 7.00 a.m. for another departure. We left Detroit promptly at 7.00 a.m. I had some trouble in the stomach. The jolting of the plane in the air usually upset my digestive system. I hardly took my breakfast served up there. One young white woman who was sitting near me was helpful. She comforted me, offered me cigarette. "No, thanks", I said. She offered me some peppermints which I accepted. At 8.05 a.m. we came to Chicago. From here I telephoned Minneapolis for Dr. J. L. Morill, the President of the University of Minnesota. I waited on the telephone booth for twenty-five minutes before the president was available on the phone. He said to me: "I shall be glad to meet you at 1.35p.m.

in my office." Our plane was originally scheduled to arrive in Minneapolis by 1.30 p.m. It was to take five minutes to get to the University. But the plane did not run on schedule. I was late from Chicago. We left Chicago by 1.15 p.m., that was twenty minutes later than the time it would have arrived in Minneapolis.

While awaiting for the plane in Chicago, I remembered my Master's Degree Thesis. I telephoned Professor Nathaniel Peffer at Political Science Department, Columbia. He was in charge of my thesis. He permitted me to go on till the following Tuesday or Wednesday, when he would expect me in his office. I also sent telegram to Charles Chadsey the book editor of the Creative Age Press in charge of my manuscript for my book *Without Bitterness*.

Finally, our plane (North Western Comp. NC 21716), left Chicago and arrived in Minneapolis at 3.30 p.m. The President of the University of Minneapolis had waited and gone. It was the Vice President who was available, but he could not come to the air-port to pick me. They had come by 1.35 p.m. and I was not there. I felt the pinch of the extra money I had to pay for a taxi to take me to the University. It meant missing one of my meals because it was not in my stringent budget.

On my arrival, we sat down to business at once. The Vice-President explained that they drove down to the air-port at 1.35 p.m. with an official car of the University and missed me. All they saw at the air-port were military men from the plane. The President he said, waited for me till 3.30 p.m. and had to go. Then he asked me: "What is all this mission about?" Before I answered, he said "of course our President was in New York last week, and Dr. Stephen Duggan told him about you, so that when you called he had a vague idea of your coming." I gave him the memorandum of the program, and explained the need of Africa and the response of other colleges I had visited. I presented my request for scholarship and the need for the President's membership in the organization. He promised to convey my message and requests to the President on his return, but warned that they could offer no more than tuition scholarship to African students.

My time was short. It was imperative to leave for Des Moines, Iowa. So after a rather breezy interlude here, the Vice-President offered to drive me to the train station. But he thought I ought to look around the campus before going away. There were 31,337 men and women students in the University. Tuition fees was $900.00. I was therefore not quite keen about tuition scholarship here, where no accommodation seemed available to the Africans, in order to allow them obtain room and board scholarship, even under a part-time job. I felt that I did not succeed here, but I did not make my feelings known to my host.

We went around the impressive campus of the State-owned land-grant institution. The campus was essentially large and some buildings massive. They specialised in Engineering, Agriculture and Medicine. I wanted to know why the Campus was so large. The Vice-President answered: "This State is of Swedish and Scandinavian populace who believe in the tradition of learning. That is the answer to your question."

The Vice-President, Dr. M. M. Willey drove me to the railway station and said: "Goodbye and good luck to you". "Thank you very much", I answered. On inquiry, a railway officer told me that I had reservation for 6 p.m. train with First Class Ticket. The mention of First Class Ticket reminded me of the First, Second, and Third Class Coaches in Nigeria. Usually, in the Eastern Railroads of the U.S.A., they had Pullman. No other intermediate classes. The 6p.m. train would leave me at Des Moines at 1.05 a.m., departing from there at 2.15 a.m. and arriving at Iowa City at 4.45 a.m. on Wednesday. I was afraid that my arrival at Iowa City so early might expose me to severe cold and sleeplessness in a City where I knew no one whatsoever, and in which no notice was given to my host of my time of arrival. And even if notice were given, 4.45 a.m. was an ungodly hour to ask anyone to expect a guest. I therefore stayed at the railway station in Minneapolis to wait for 10.20 p.m. train which would arrive Des Moines 6.55 a.m. and Iowa City 7.15 a.m. next morning instead of 4.45 a.m. It was really cold, bone chilling cold. I had nothing to keep me warm adequately. I was sitting up all the night in the open station, shivering. While at the station the people

of Minneapolis were most friendly. I noticed no sign of race prejudice. To keep myself busy, I wrote seven letters and posted them there. I started to read *Basic Teachings of Great Economists* when the train arrived. We left Minneapolis at 10.20 p.m. As I said the weather was intolerably cold. The temperature came to a zero point. I could not sleep in the train. The coaches of those Rock Island Railroad System were so different from those of Eastern Railroad Lines. They were comparatively archaic and dilapidated. Cold air could penetrate into the coaches through the windows. I protected myself with my top coat. It was not enough. I covered the window joints with two cotton materials on the seats. That did not do. I added the paper I was reading to enhance the cotton material, but to no avail. I gave up hope and accepted the situation with resignation and lost my sleep the whole night. We were late arriving at Des Moines at 8.55 a.m. This was now little confusion in my schedule.

It was necessary, in the first instance, to get Iowa City over the telephone in order to notify President Virgil M. Hancher of the State University Iowa, of my lateness. At 9.15 a.m. I got him over the telephone. He agreed to see me at 3.00 p.m. at Iowa City next day. While yet awaiting at the Des Moines railway station, I befriended an African American, an employee at the station. His conversation was a relief to my *disgusted mind*. He came into the washroom where I was shaving. He went to the drugstore and bought me Vaseline and Noxema Cream for 45 and 15 cents respectively. Then we started to talk and philosophize on white and black races. I told him why I was travelling. He said "Don't tell me, I am a reader of human beings." Then on we went. He said that black man's problem was mainly psychological, and that was why he gave his son training to free him from psychological inferiority. He enumerated what he thought his son could do to be free from inferiority complex.

1. By doing no manual job as an end in itself.
2. By not working for white man all his young years.
3. By making him disgusted with dirty work, and seek to use his brain and hand together while yet in school.

4. By not begging but getting things for himself.
5. By attending good schools.

He thought that Africa had great hope because the people showed no fear for death (how much I wished what he said were true for the Nigerians). Then he added: "Although you have decided to go to Iowa City, but for goodness sake, don't leave Ames, out. Iowa State College of Agriculture is our best Agricultural College in the Country. By all means go there."

Based on this piece of advice, I telephoned President Charles E. Friley of the College. He was kind enough to ask me to visit his College even before going to Iowa City. My friend arranged a bus for me, and gave me the name of Dr. C. T. Gulberson in Iowa City. I joined the bus by 6.30 a.m. and arrived at Ames at 2.30p.m., and was in the office of the President of Iowa State College of Agriculture by 3.00 p.m. The President introduced me to Dr. A. B. Caine of Agricultural Department.

Dr. Caine took me to the college farm of 2,765 acres. This farmland was being used for research, poultry, horticulture, nursery – orchards and apples. The research laboratory was near the dairy farm for teaching and experimentation (Milking palor was of the multiple unit. After the insertion, the fluid went into cooling process then to the cans before going into the refrigerators). The cows there fed mostly on corn. I was told that corn yield was considerable, an average of 59 bushels per acre or a total of about 641 million bushels per year. That was tremendous for an educational institution.

We went into Friley Hall, College Hospital, Engineering School (Diesel Engineering Building and Agricultural Engineering Building), a most enchanting Library Building, Home Economics Building where 2,000 girls studied. We observed Meats Laboratory, Veterinary School – one of the largest in the country, Horse Barns, where I saw Belgium horses, Swine farm, where I saw a lot of mighty pigs, and I understood they sold good number of pigs weekly at an average of $27.00 a pig. Dr. Caine said: "We have a good school of Engineering here and a large school of Home Economics and one of the most important Veterinary Medicine Schools." Then

he reminded me of Mr. Attah from Ibibio, Nigeria, who was an Agricultural Student here. He asked me. "Where is Mr. Attah now – in the Army?" I told him he was in Nigeria. He concluded: "I wondered whether Army had got him because he last assured me that the school would be glad to have Nigerian students register with them on my recommendation". Again, my dreams of scientific agriculture in Africa was being buttressed by my practical contact with the sources and secrets of American agricultural strength.

On December 15, 1943, I was on my way to Iowa City. I travelled by bus. In that bus were over half a dozen young boys between the ages of eighteen and twenty three. They kept the place bubbling by singing all the way while the bus moved. They sang: "Down in the Heart of Texas" and "Lay that Pistol down" et cetera. I was sitting at the last seat beside an old man, Mr. Toms who said he was Iowa State Tax Commission Officer. He wanted to know whom I was. I told him about my mission and country of origin. He at once called upon the singing boys to order and told them that an important stranger was in their midst. His introduction of me served as a signal for an outburst of chatter. Neither the boys nor the bus driver had seen an indigenous African before as they exclaimed. The driver lit up the bus to enable them see and shake my hand one by one. They wanted my autograph. They asked me to stand up in a moving bus and talk to them. My accent seemed to intrigue them. I stood up but did not speak. I only gave them a copy of a Cincinnati daily paper where my mission was well published. They read it with alacrity. Some asked me questions about Nigeria. It was another opportunity for me to popularise Africa among the youths of America, and being my mission, I did the best I knew how. We stopped at Grinell, Iowa, for coffee. I had cherry pie, milk and coffee. By 9.30 p.m., we arrived in Iowa City. I was a total stranger. I asked one man at the bus station if he could suggest where I could stay overnight. He looked vague and absent-minded and said: "I don't know off-hand where you can go." I telephoned Dr. C. T. Gulberson who recommended several hotels including Jefferson. I telephoned Jefferson Hotel. They said that President Hancher had reserved a room for me there.

It was a comfortable hotel and people were friendly. I had no dinner, but I took a light lunch including an egg, lettuce and beer. I went to bed at 12.10 a.m. till 6.30 a.m. This was the first time since I left New York that I ever had a comfortable sleep in a well-heated room, except when I was in Cincinnati.

In the morning, of December 16, I went to the State University of Iowa. The first person I met was Dr. C. Woody Thompson, Dean of Students and Director of Student Affairs. I was in his office at 8.30 a.m. Dr. Thompson was tall, amiable and of respectable personality. We went to the office of the President. I told them about Africa and my idea of educating its people for freedom. They agreed with me that uneducated masses make neither good producers nor good consumers. And they were pleased that I preferred to emphasize American education throughout the African Continent.

Dr. Hancher, the President, said that Iowa City, compared with Columbus, Ohio, might be considered provincial. People here were conservative in their outlook with a population of only 17,000 inhabitants. He said that they had to combat the non-cosmopolitan attitude of the citizens in considering African Students on their campus. Then he added: "We have Latin American Students here already. Most of them came from Panama just where applications came from." Then I insisted that what was possible for South Americans in Iowa City should be possible for African boys too. He agreed: "We certainly will accept your students from Africa recommended by you, and we can guarantee tuition fees only in the meantime, but we can't give you a specific number of tuition scholarships we can afford just now".

As I walked out of the President's office, I began to think of this America. Here is a city of only 17,000 people, which has a university with an enrolment of 6,727 men and 3,043 women students. It was founded in 1843 hundred years ago. They have liberal Arts College, School of Journalism, School of Religion, School of Fine Arts, School of Letter, College of Law, College of Medicine, College of Engineering, College of Education, College of Commerce, Division of Physical Education and Graduate College. And above all, they train soldiers-men who would defend American culture and

institutions and protect democracy and freedom from the ravages of force and violence.

Right in front of my spiritual eyes I saw Africa standing as a naked maiden without visual and auditory organs. She had no flesh to support her frames, no nerves to control or co-ordinate the complex organisms that spell national life. Compared with America, Africa was an empty aggregate of shredded and trembling body. Suffering from the disease of cultural frigidity and intellectual agglutination.

It was my plan to visit the University of Wisconsin in Madison, but there was no good connection through the bus or the train to enable me get to Chicago on time. I therefore abandoned visiting Wisconsin at this time.

At 9.15 a.m. I left Iowa City for Chicago on the Rocket train. Rocket train was comfortable. Every one I saw – men, women and girls were quite friendly. When a stranger travels in a strange land, it is most soothing to find people who show some regard and interest, no matter how superficial. It was a bright day for the winter. I read a copy of the *Chicago Sun*. In that paper I read of Dr. Robert H. Hutchins (President of the University of Chicago) advocate of more adequate salary for American teachers while no royalty for whatever a teacher published. Such royalty, Dr. Hutchins thought, would go to the university fund. It was an interesting piece of reading to me because the problem of inadequate salary for teachers appeared to be universally perennial. It was because of inadequate salary and other poor service conditions that I revolted against teaching profession when I was in Nigeria.

We arrived Chicago by noon. I jumped into a telephone booth for a long distance call. I telephoned President Dykstra of the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin. His secretary said that he had gone to California and was expected after Christmas. This piece of news eliminated my going to Madison altogether. I was rather eager to visit that institution because it was famous for its liberal attitude in the matters of race relations. Two Nigerians who studied there, gave a glowing picture of the friendly disposition of the citizens of Madison. I was not too happy for the money spent in the long distance telephone call from Chicago to Madison. Any

such expenditure during this period, I felt it. I was a poor student without regular source of income.

I telephoned Purdue University of Lafayette Indiana. I had communicated the President Dr. Frederic L. Hovde previously. His secretary told me that Dr. Hovde was away and could not be in the office before next Monday. That again eliminated my going there at that time. I went into the washing room of the Chicago down town railroad station to clean my self. As I started to brush my teeth, my tongue started bleeding. I was frightened. As I went to ease myself I found also that I had pile trouble. On top of these, I had a mild attack of fever and fatigue and my stomach was upset. I had plenty of irregularities in my feeding and sleeping ever since I left New York for this my first journey for my scholarship program in fulfilment of the admonition of 1937 – "Do not loose hope, Africa needs you." I was aware that all my colleagues in the U.S. were doing their studies while I was being pushed around this strange and mighty country by something I knew not what. Nature is an exacting judge – too efficient to overlook the sins of irregularities.

I was therefore too sick to continue my journey to Urbana, Delaware and Dayton. I decided to go to those places next opportunity. I started to plan for immediate return to New York from Chicago. I telephoned the American Air Line, T.W.A., and the Eastern Air Line. None had an immediate accommodation for me. But the American Air Line had a space only for Cincinnati and Columbus, but this would be wasteful in time and money. I therefore bought a pullman ticket for New York City. We left Chicago 4.45p.m. This was my most tranquil and enjoyable trip. I rested well in the train. I began to think of my scholarship mission. I wondered why I was so sick and tired physically. I was eager to get to New York City in order to find out why the bleeding tongue. That was my greatest worry. There was a central sense of satisfaction within me, when I remembered that everyone I met seemed fascinated by my program for African Education.

I read *Your Life*. Something there intrigued me. The magazine discussed the issue of Leadership, its qualities and expectations. Leadership, it said must be genuine, altruistic, and dynamic. Constant

self-sacrifice was the price of leadership. At 9.30 p.m. it was time to go to bed in the pullman car. I went to my upper berth. There I started reading a book: *Education of Democracy*. This was a crucial and cogent book of faith in democracy. I think that such a book should be read by everyone. I also read some chapters of *The Republic* by Charlse Beard. It was interesting to note how American intellectuals defend and adore their new found nation and its culture. I also noted how Dr. Beard followed the methods of the Hellenic thinkers in his approach. I slept soundly all night.

We came to Albany., the capital of the State of New York by 11.15 a.m. on Friday, December 17. As we were coming close to our journey, I began to admire America more and more. I was impressed with the services, courtesies and conveniences in this New York Central Railway System. I thought of hot and cold water supply, cushioned chairs, newspapers and magazines to read, stationery to write with while in transit. There was a Porter. He was over fifty years of age and extremely energetic. He made all our beds, and bedmaking in the pullman coaches was no fun. He managed all our baggages and catered to the ego of every single passenger. He did all these cheerfully throughout the journey from Chicago. And as we came to Harmone, New York by 1.45 p.m., I asked the Porter how far we were from New York City? "It is 33 miles from Harmone to New York City" he said.

Now nearer to New York City, the Porter started all over again in his jolly job, brushing the clothes and shoes of every passenger who wished to be brushed. He came to me and said: "No. 6, may I brush you please. Let me brush you and you can continue to write." I obliged and he brushed my suit on me. The train entered into the tunnel, leading toward the Grand Central in New York City where I ended my journey. As I was on my way to the International House by subway, the impression of the comfort of the trip from Chicago lingered on. I said to myself: "Nigerians must one day be made to enjoy their trips. Transport companies must train their officers and workers to handle the passengers kindly, and with dignity. Food, water, bed, bath, radio, papers, and so forth should be provided for Nigerian passengers. Means of communication of all kinds must

be established and humanized in Nigeria in order to encourage human movement if we desire to become a united people."

Another thing, I thought of two white passengers who travelled with me. One of them occupied the Berth directly below my Berth. He was a merchant mariner from Chicago. The other was a radio tube engineer from New Jersey. They wanted to know about engineering possibilities in post-war Nigeria. They expressed a great interest in the development of the under-developed areas. They were in their twenties, all about my age, but they seemed quite anxious to master all the post-war economic world possibilities. The only African who could stand such American foresight, and meet the challenge of the awakened and curious youths of the West was an intellectually ready African. Then I asked myself: "Can my educational plan help Africa in this global process?"

I felt it was now time to take a big plunge – to canalize my thoughts and organize my action into a concrete international institution. This decision gave birth to immediate formal and legal set up of my own personal program which I voluntarily incorporated into the first international organization of its type in history which I called the American Council on African Education.

Chapter Seventeen

AFRICAN EDUCATION PROGRAM BORN IN AMERICA

A new day entered into my existence. A time to canalize my thoughts, dreams and activities into a concrete international institution. This African education program replaced my identity as Nwafor Orizu putting up a garb of religious arrogance that Africa needs me and as if heavenly ordained, I turned this initial personal achievement into an international organization for African continental destiny.

– Nwafor Orizu.

Once I had made the decision which I stated in the preceding chapter, a new day entered into my existence. African education program replaced my identity as Nwafor Orizu. All my previous experiences in Nnewi and Nigeria vanished. I put upon myself the garb of religious arrogance, that once Africa needs me, (a holy sanction), I must play the role of a crusader – that is "to establish an aggressive movement for the defence or advancement of an idea or cause or against a public evil."[1] To me, imperialism was evil. To me, ignorance in Africa was a public evil. To me, that every other part of the world enjoys American education in full except Africa was a public evil. Under the spell of this spiritual norm, I lost all sense of security. I lost all sense of calculation of ways and means. These are the ways of the wise, the conservatives and the servants of the status quo.

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1 The Living Webster Encyclopedia Dictionary of the English Language.

I therefore consulted Mrs. Eileen J. Garrett for the immediate incorporation of my organization. She wondered why my organization must be incorporated. I explained that the responsibility of managing the international concept of educational program cannot be done legally and with peoples' respect and government recognition without being formally incorporated. She offered her office at 11 East 44th Street in New York City to be used as the temporary office for this novel establishment. Before then I had used my international house or university address for all preliminary correspondence. Mr. Irving M. Rosen, a Judge of the Municipal Court of New York City at the invitation of Mrs. Garrett served as our legal adviser. He prepared the Certificate of Incorporation of the American Council on African Education Incorporated under the Membership Corporation Law of the State of New York. On April 17, 1944, the A.C.A.E. was officially incorporated as a membership corporation.

I felt that this accomplishment was one of the greatest events that occurred in my life. I had no information that any other non quota immigrant African student while in school, had independently, without any attachment to already established institutions, incorporated an international organization for mass education of Africans in American Universities.

One may begin to wonder how I was able to finance my new organization in addition to my college expenses.

Royalty from my book *Without Bitterness* was used up for A.C.A.E. while money realised from my speaking engagements carried me through school. My first year school expenses at Columbia University was financed by Chief J. C. Ulasi, who sent me one thousand dollars single handedly without any help from any other person in Nigeria. This was very useful and helpful in my defraying a part of one year expenses at Columbia Law School out of a total of two and half years I studied in Columbia University. The other major part of my expenses there became my personal responsibility.

I must note here the salutory effect of Chief J. C. Ulasi's financial help at this time. For the later part of my first year and the whole of my second year in Columbia, I paid my way as I did

for my first degree in Ohio State. I never enjoyed any scholarship as such from any American University.

What has to be clear at this point is that the concept of turning the scholarships awarded to me personally into an organizational property and management on an African Continental Basis, is a dream of mine and mine alone. I did not discuss it with any of my African colleagues. I did not discuss it with any American and none ever helped me to originate or carry out the idea up to that point. It was only Mrs. Eileen J. Garrett who helped me immensely as the publisher of *Without Bitterness* not as a person interested in African scholarship per se. The incorporation of the organization and the original founding members were all initiated in her office.

What happened was that after my initiating this idea single handedly, I realized my position as a slave of imperialism whose ideas could not work in American society, except through the co-operation of eminent American citizens in education, politics and social field. Their immediate function so far as I was concerned could not have been for them to be involved in the day to day affairs of the office but to give me protection and advice. Americans of those days were not in the mood to be so involved in the affairs of the dark continent in the midst of world war II. And those who gave this co-operation were not the monied class. They were academics whose support was not physical cash.

I knew therefore that I faced a nation in which a young man with a new idea will have to prove himself in three ways before someone would take him seriously.

1. The spirit and character must be there.
2. There must be intelligence.
3. There must be a financial nucleus.

These three requirements were indispensable. I knew I had the spirit. I was capable of taking risks. As for intelligence and character, I could not be the judge. I knew I had no money but I had nucleus in the royalty from *Without Bitterness* – my first largest single income in the world. I was a foreigner. I faced the national prejudice any foreigner would anticipate in a strange land. It was not easy to convey

ideas to others. Problems that may appear urgent to the Africans may not have an immediate appeal to the Americans.

Being a nation of bigness, of vast territories and enormous wealth, an American was interested in big things. They had no use for small projects.

I was essentially of the idea that the program would be Africa-wide. But such idea when reduced to practical purposes, presented its dilemma. There was a lot more to being a foreigner in America. When you present your program, a lot of people feel that they have enough social headache in the U.S.A. and were not prepared to take up the burden of far-off peoples in Africa. You only have to know what a national storm of protest Mr. Henry Wallace aroused against his suggestion that milk should be supplied to Hotentot children in Africa. Some times, the battle seems lost before it is begun. You would not know which way to go.

Given a clean slate to start with, any plan that is utopian seems at first sight the easiest thing in the world. You cannot even imagine that an obstacle involved in conquering a single minute detail may require your tremendous effort not understandable to remote observers. I cannot rely on my memory to tell how many sketches I made and discarded in turn. One thing I remember was that mine was an under-world revolutionary program including my every movement and inner plan from the search light of the imperialistic intelligence.

Considering the state of Africa, the American ignorance of Africa; the antagonism of the colonial governments, I was tied down involuntarily to a project. I knew I could narrow down the scheme, forget Africa or Nigeria as a whole and use the scholarships so far granted for my family and Nnewi and free myself from the great bondage of nationalism into which I was leading myself like a man on the edge of a precipice. But I was being pushed by something greater than myself. The urge to connect America and Africa through education was to me to be one of the greatest needs of the world and a particular need of the black race. To me it meant everything. The gate into America has been closed for so long. It must be opened for more active cultural relations and interchange. That many thought I was naive and somewhat melancholic did not bother me. Having

been satisfied that the scholarship organization had been incorporated, I was relaxed in contemplating over other issues when a telephone rang. It was Mrs. Garrett with a decisive message that all the chapters of the book must be completed in two days. It was the deadline for her book editor. I was hard put to it. I still had two chapters to complete. I rushed home to the international house, finished the chapter I was writing for the typist and continued with the last chapter, from 4.00 p.m. in the afternoon till 1.00 a.m. next morning, when I got up to stretch myself, I drank cold water and continued, until I came to the end. My typist was kind enough to co-operate and enabled me to drop these two chapters appropriately.

One spring morning in April when the first two copies of the book reached Charles P. Chadsey, I got a telephone call at the International House, and a drama began: Mr. Chadsey (the book editor): "Prince Orizu, come and have your baby."

Orizu: (excitedly) "What!" (and my stomach turned several times).
Chadsey: "I mean your baby is here Orizu."
Orizu: "What are you saying my friend?" (I began to tremble).
Chadsey: In a stronger voice "Come down and have your baby Orizu."
Orizu: I said to myself, "Who could have taken a baby to my publishing house when I had no girl friend not to talk of a wife."

Chadsey who seemed to understand my dilemma kept vicious silence, kept me in suspense and seemed to have heaved a smile and said:

Chadsey: "Orizu your book is out."

Something like cold water sprang on my head and I kept silent, for a while to keep Chadsey in suspense and then asked:

Orizu: "Do you mean that the book is out already?"
Chadsey: "Yes Orizu, only two copies here. One is for you and I am sending one to Mrs. Garrett in Florida where she is vacating."

I jumped out of my room, got into 7th Avenue Subway to 11 East 44th Street and took my baby!

After this "baby" episode another shocker came to me. Exactly one week after receiving this book, in the midst of my overwhelming joy for the triumph, I received a registered letter from my publisher Mrs. Eileen J. Garrett. She scolded me to death that while she read the first five chapters of my book which I first submitted to her directly, Mr. Chadsey the book editor, did not show her subsequent chapters before the publication. She said she did not realize that I was all out attacking British Government in Nigeria running after her as if she was a squirrel on branches of international trees. Then she threw a bombshell by saying "I shall also tell all my American friends to withdraw from supporting your scheme. Do not come to my office for any other aid for this your scholarship scheme". I was terribly surprised and embarrassed. Mrs. Garrett was the source of my inspiration and success and now she is gone. I found myself as a lonely vagabond on the lap of my lonely mother Africa. Then I heard a voice that said to me, reply to Mrs. Garrett and accept her challenge, and I wrote. I thanked her for all her generosity and gave her allowance for being an English woman. Firmly and unequivocally I stated that I was quite willing to accept any punishment or disappointment for my conviction that Africa must be free. Anyone who is unable to accept punishment for his conviction is not worth living. I sent a copy of my reply to C. P. Chadsey the book editor.[2] Just before this letter was posted to Mrs. Garrett, I got a letter from Wendell Wilkie through her Secretary Ruth, accepting to serve on the board of my scholarship program and to get his friends to join. I enclosed a copy of this Wendell Wilkie's response in my reply to Mrs. Garrett's letter.

Incidentally, Mr. Chadsey the book editor, had already sent copies of the book to important Newspapers and Magazines in the country almost at the time he sent copies to Mrs. Garrett and myself.

April Spring gives the pleasantest, romantic weather in the mornings. One Sunday April Spring Morning, Kwame Nkrumah, Jones-Quartey, K. O. Mbadiwe, Nnodu Okongwu and I were sitting

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2 He was a republican candidate for presidency at the time and the author of the famous *One World* that sold in millions.

outside on the pavement of International House over-looking Riverside drive and Hudson river. We were reading Sunday Herald Tribune and Sunday Times. As we turned to New York Times Book Review, we saw two full pages review of *Without Bitterness*. We all read it. It was something I never expected that of all papers, the New York Times will give two full pages to the review of this book. I thanked my God that Africa was given this honour. Another response came from American Library Journal recommending the book to all libraries in America, followed by almost all important newspapers in the U.S. such as New York Times, New York Herald Tribune, (reviewed by world famous Dr. E. B. Du Bois), New York Post, Xtian Science Monitor, Columbia Dispatch, Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, San Francisco Chronicle, Dallas Times Herald, Chicago Sun, Heartford Times, The New Republic, The New Yorker and Negro Digest. All praised the book. Shortly afterwards, Mrs. Garrett replied to my letter thanking me for my courageous letter and admitting that she miscalculated American-opinion which was in my favour through the book reviews in the Newspapers, and therefore withdrew her earlier resignation from my scholarship scheme.

Sequel to the publication of my book and the popular review and its general acceptance by the reading public of the U.S.A., Mr. George S. Schuyler who was then the dean of Afro-American editors and a special executive branch representative of the Pittsburgh Courier in New York City, organized a special reception for me in his residence at 270 Convent Avenue at the request of his daughter Philipa Duke Schuyler. Here the editors of many important Newspapers black and white gathered in my honour as the author of *Without Bitterness*. Philipa his only daughter and world famous pianist played in my honour during the occasion. At the close of this occasion, Mr. Schuyler surprised me with the offer of an appointment as one of the editorial columnists of the Pittsburgh Courier. Although choked with my already self imposed responsibilities in the establishment of the A.C.A.E. and the urgencies of the African Students Association of which I had become the President and the promotion of its magazine the African Interpreter, I accepted the offer with alacrity. It was an unusual and rare opportunity to bring African problems directly into



Mrs Eileen J. Garret and two important editors in her Park Avenue House New York during the celebration of the publication of my book "Without Bitterness" in 1944.



Bessie Betty, WOR Commentator interviewing me in WOR New York Radio Station in 1944.



Commentators of the WOXR radio station (New York) interviewing me soon after the publication of " Without Bitterness," April 1944.

the homes of thousands of Americans every week and it was a welcome relief as it offered me an opportunity to collect some dollars to finance the administrative expenses of my scholarship organization. My column was named "Africa Speaks." When Mr. Prattis, the then Executive Editor of the Pittsburgh Courier gave this title to this column, I felt flattered and humbled and immediately remembered again what Zik said to me in 1937, the first time I met him in my life: "To my friend Xtopher Orizu, do not loose hope, Africa needs you." I was then a pupil teacher in Onitsha. Eight years afterwards, a new voice in America said to me: "When you speak, it is Africa speaking."

There was one episode that leaves an indelible imprint on my mind concerning my student days activities in America in relation to the foundation of colonial freedom. In all the international conferences of the League of Nations after the first world war, and all the international conferences of the allies during the second world war, and meetings on post war plans, nothing was ever said about the freedom and sovereignty of African colonies. No Colonial African Nation ever attended these conferences even as observers. One day, I summoned Mbadiwe and Ojike at Theresa Hotel, 125th Street and 7th Avenue Manhattan, New York City. We agreed that one of us should proceed poste haste to San Francisco and represent Nigeria incognito. We agreed that Ojike should be the person to go while Mbadiwe and I raised the money to finance the trip. Ojike told us that he arrived in San Francisco and went to the International Conference Hall without any accreditation or official recognition whatsoever because Nigeria was not yet a sovereign nation.

After accreditation formalities of all sovereign allied nations were completed and Nigeria was not mentioned, Ojike jumped up with arms raised to Heaven, exclaiming "Nigeria! Nigeria! Nigeria!" to the top of his voice. Of course this aroused the desired attention and a crowd surged towards him. A few delegates including the Russian delegate gave him their cards and warm handshakes.

Earlier, the African Students Association had petitioned and forwarded a memo to the American Government requesting the inclusion in the United Nations Charter a promise of independence

for colonial peoples. With this we pressured other liberal American organizations particularly African-Americans to presurize the U.S. government. We were also aware that back home in Africa agitations were also going on in this direction. To our great excitement, the New York Times on June 11, 1945, reported that Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the interior, has telegraphed a request to the American delegation (to San Francisco) to change its stand and try to write into the United Nations Charter, a promise of independence for all colonial peoples. I highlighted this episode in my Africa Speaks Column under the caption: "Now Is The Time For The U.S. to Cling to Ickes Dictum on Colonies."[3] Whether it was our own pressure or the pressure of other groups, or a combination of both that had brought about this monumental change of policy by American government, affecting colonial peoples' freedom, this remained and will always remain one of the most incomparable landmarks in the process of founding and promoting of colonial freedom in the history of Africa of the twentieth century, of which the African students in America played a vital role as far back as 1945.

At this juncture, concerning my scholarship scheme, Jones-Quartey had just got his M.A. degree under the A.C.A.E. scholarship and now in my office. Okongwu had also obtained his M.A. degree under this same scheme and had just entered New York University for his Ph.D. again under my scholarship program getting ready for our college program in Nnewi as we planned. With the structure set, I felt it was time for me to take my mission to Africa and to test whether the scheme will succeed under a mighty empire.

One day, I went to New York Central to check my ticket for departure to Nigeria. A special telephone message came and I was paged. I received the call, Jones Quartey in my office told me that he just received a cable from Nigeria which read: "Chief J. C. Ulasi is dead, proceed home" signed: S. R. C. Muoma. I was bewildered. This was the heaviest blow of all times. I soliloquised: "I left Nigeria in 1939 fatherless and now I am going back to Nigeria as an orphan

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3 A. A. Nwafor Orizu, Africa Speaks (Nigeria: Horizonal Publishers, 1990) p. 29.

again fatherless. Orphanage had become the badge of my existence!!" Then a spirit came to me and said, "Nwafor God is your father." I turned away from New York Central to my office to stop Quartey from spreading the news to other Africans. The news of J. C. Ulasi's death put a final stamp to the possibility of my continued stay in New York City at that time, but vital aspects of my self imposed assignments had been successfully concluded including the following:

1. I had obtained my B.A. degree from the Ohio State University Columbus Ohio.
2. I had obtained my M.A. degree from Columbia University in new York City.
3. I had set the organization of the African Students Association with its Magazine "The African Interpreter" with its headquarters at my 411 International House, 500 Riverside drive, New York City.
4. I had succeeded to found an International Organization – the American Council on African Education Incorporated for my scholarship scheme and got it incorporated in New York with office at prestigious 55W 42nd Street, New York City.
5. I had gone round the whole country and obtained over one hundred and fifty University Scholarships from American Colleges and Universities.
6. I had written and published a book *Without Bitterness*.
7. I had already obtained scholarships for two of my colleagues, H. A. B. Jones-Quartey of Ghana and Nnodu Okongwu of Nigeria. While H. A. B. Jones-Quartey read his M.A. degree in Columbia University, Okongwu obtained both his masters and doctorate degrees in education from Columbia Teachers College and New York University respectively under my scholarship program.
8. I had become an Associate Editor of the Negro Digest.
9. I had become an editorial columnist of the Pittsburgh Courier with my "Africa Speaks" Column which brought the question of indigenous African to about 300,000 readers every week.

10. I had addressed most prestigious Institutions in America such as Harvard University Faculty Club, Fisk University, Boston University, Wilberforce University (Shomburg Collection – a part of New York City Library). Negro History Week – N.Y. etc. I had travelled far and wide in Virginia and Florida.
11. I had developed and enunciated the philosophies of Horizontal Education and African Irredentism for Educational Emancipation and Political Revolution for the African Continent.

At the close of all these endeavours, the second world war which started on my arrival in the U.S.A., ended at the time I had to go back to Africa with message of educational and political salvation.

On November 14th 1945, I left New York by air to Washington. There I had a private talk with Henry Agard Wallace, the Vice-President of the U.S. who bade me farewell. Mr. Wallace was at that time presiding over the Senate but he still took time off to talk to me over the phone, giving me words of encouragement and advice. Our plane flew through Miami Florida and I boarded an inter-continental flight to Natal, Brazil, from thence to Dakar, Senegal.

During our flight across the Atlantic, one engine of the air craft failed. When it was announced to the passengers on the plane that the air craft had trouble and that they should get ready for a forced landing any time, there was pandemonium in the plane. I was surprised to see many passengers depicting a great fear for the prospect of death by swearing and soliciting. To me, I immediately surrendered my life, not as a fatalist but as an item for gods to remove from or retain on earth. I simply closed my eyes for a moment and prayed by saying, "Thy will be done." I remembered that I had bought an accident insurance for a premium of $10,000 in New York City which my mother would benefit from should anything happen to me. Our plane however succeeded in making a forced landing in Azores and after repairs, continued the journey and arrived Dakar on the night of the 18th of November.

One thing struck me forcefully during this trip. Throughout the journey from New York across the Eastern United States, the ground twinkled with lights denoting human activities and civilization.

But on getting to Africa, the whole west coast cities and towns below were blacked out with unrelieved darkness. I recalled with great sadness that my Africa was labelled the Dark Continent. Through this scene, the contrast was brought home to me more poignantly. We finally arrived in Accra where I decided to spend a day.

I called on my old colleague Ako Adjei. Adjei had left New York earlier to study law in London and had returned to Ghana and helped to form the Convention Peoples Party of Ghana. At that time, Kwame Nkrumah was still in England. Adjei took me round Ghana. We went to Achimota College, the Supreme Court and we ended having a meeting with Dr. Danquah. At this meeting, they sought my advice about the organization of their Convention Peoples Party and the idea of inviting Nkrumah to come and become its secretary. I told them that their idea was good for a quicker political result if done with caution and circumspection. They knew that I had lived intimately with Nkrumah in Lincoln University and in New York City during our days of collective action and preparation for African freedom.

On November 20 I left Ghana on the last lap of my journey back home to Nigeria after my six years of sojourn in the United States of America.

SECTION V

HORIZONTAL EDUCATION AND AFRICAN IRREDENTISM INTRODUCED INTO AFRICA

With his historic accomplishments as recorded in the preceding sections, Orizu returned to Nigeria on November 20, 1945, at the close of the famous general strike in Nigeria. He came home with two novel messages – Horizontal Education and African Irredentism. These two missions he sacrificially spread all over Nigeria under open attack by the colonial government in Nigeria. With the patriotic response of liberal Nigerians, he was able to come out with resounding victory, when Nigerian youths under his scholarship marched over westward to the United States. Without resting his head for a moment, he joined these students again back to America. This selfless journey back to America he made for the sake of youths of Africa, depriving himself of the most rare honour offered him by the Ibo Union to be the first president of the Ibo State Union at the time he was departing for U.S.A. for the second time in 1947. Personal gainful position and power had always been secondary in his philosophy of service to his countrymen.

– Editor

Liberty Or Chains – Africa Must Be

Chapter Eighteen

THE NIGERIA THAT I MET

Abuses and confusion will finally produce a crisis which will lead the newly powerful classes and leaders to move actively for more thoroughgoing changes than have previously been made .... Then and only then, will begin the critical period....

– George Sorel.

On that morning of November 20, 1945, we left Accra. We came to Lagos in about a couple of hours. As our plane landed, I saw a few persons standing at the airport, piercing their curious eyes, guessing at me. They were Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ndukwe Egbuonu, L. P. Ojukwu and my brother Onyenkuzi. With the eyes of one who just left New York City not many hours ago, the sizes of these men shrunk in my sight. At that immediate instance, none of them looked so impressive. Their suits looked dimunitive and grotesque. Their faces appeared somewhat lifeless. Azikiwe seemed tired and beclouded. His mood indicated that he felt surrounded and terrified. The color of his skin had lost some of its effulgence and charm. He had lost his youthful attractiveness. There were signs of weariness in his face. I could not help seeing the change which the pressure of 1945 general strike and subsequent government suppression of his press had made on him. His eyes seemed less luminous though as penetrating as ever; his bearing had lost some lightness and the grace it had when I left him in 1939.

We shook hands. He looked me over but said nothing except to smile with studied satisfaction. Then he stepped into the back of the car. I sat beside him while others entered, and we drove from

Ikeja airport to Yaba. As we drove along, I noticed that Zik seemed disinclined to talk. I believed that he was thoroughly satisfied to see me back, and that his silence was due to the fact that he was thinking about me and what essential information we had in store for each other. I recollected that it was not long ago while I was yet in New York, that he sent us cablegrams pleading that we in America help dissuade the British Government in Nigeria from banning his press or from ordering his deportation and thus endangering his property. His cablegram came to my office through Pittsburgh Courier of which I was an editorial columnist. I organized public opinion in the United States in his favor which made many organizations to cable protest to Washington D.C., London and Nigeria. I wrote four different editorials in my Africa Speaks Column in Pittsburgh Courier as follows:

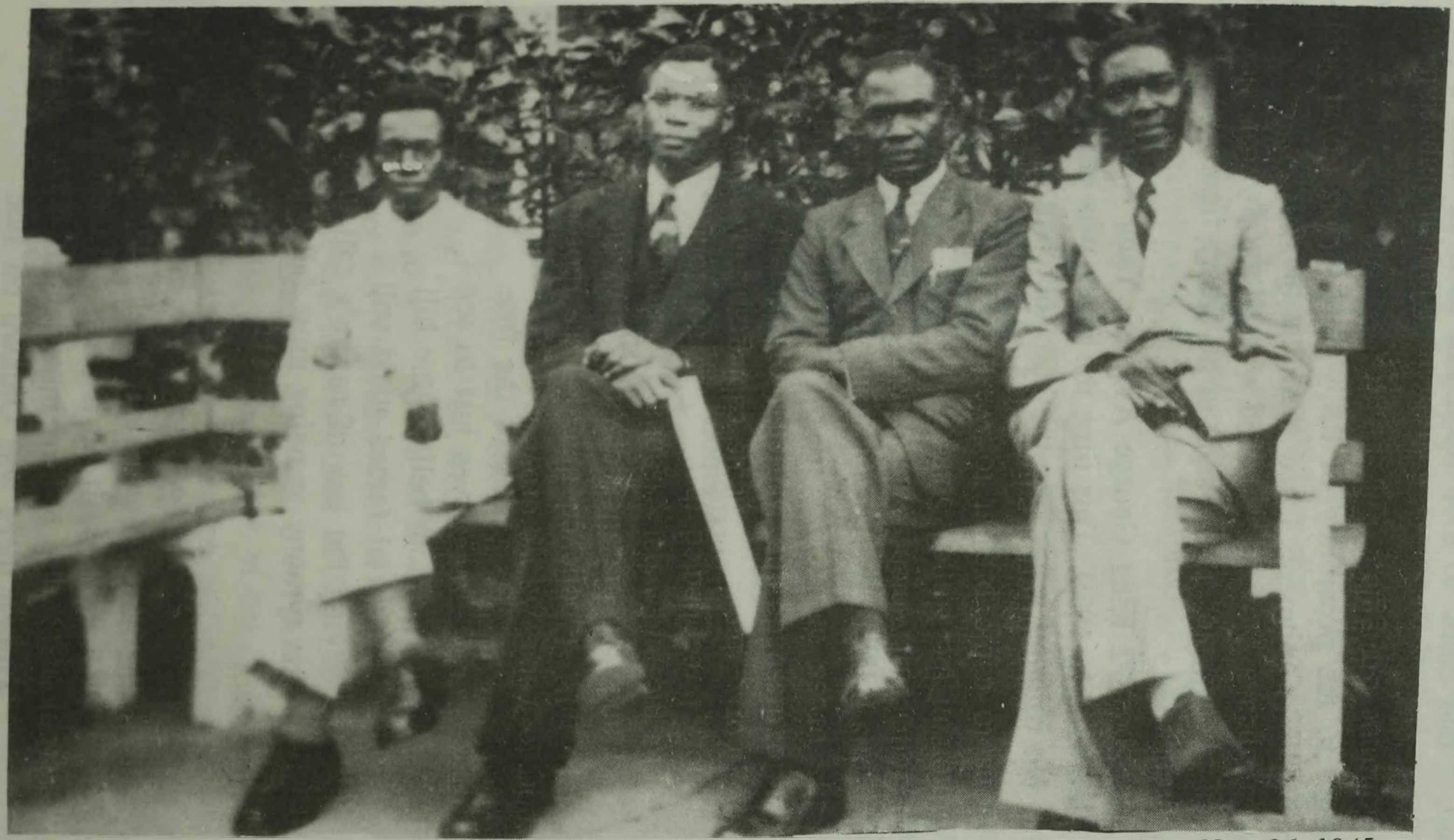
1. Africa Speaks No. 13 – Arrest of Azikiwe brings to Head Differences in Nigerian Conception of British Relations.
2. Africa Speaks No. 13B – Terror In Nigeria.
3. Africa Speaks No. 15 – Nigerian Workers Swear Never to Surrender Their Demands from Government.
4. Africa Speaks No. 17 – Militant Publisher Gets Royal Support to Continue Struggle.[1]

These trenchant articles were written to frighten imperialism by exposure to America public and the Western allies and safeguard Zik from the colonial wrath. I also summoned African students who collectively communicated their own protest to President Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, the Colonial Office and the British Nigerian Government.

I was therefore fully conscious of the political tension in Nigeria. I could understand even philosophically the change of attitude in Zik. It struck me that his attitude was that of an old man. Perhaps, he was ageing long before his time, worn out by the colonial task. I imagined with pity and dismay what nationalism could take out

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1 A. A. Nwafor Orizu, Africa Speaks (Nigeria: Horizontal Publishers, 1990) pp. 86–87.



Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, H.U. Kaine and Moses Balonwu welcoming me back from U.S.A. on Nov. 26, 1945 after my address on "Horizontal Education and African Irredentism" to the nation at the Glover Memorial Hall garden, Lagos.

of a man. I had come to look upon Zik as if he were a part of natural forces – a concrete expression of some great store of vital energy to be reckoned with in Africa's destiny. I had hardly given any thought to the possibility of the waning of his strength. And now, in that brief moment, I had seen that the Goliath in him was weakening, at least momentarily. And with all my joy for safe arrival and for meeting him again, the sight of his weary figure struck down into my memory.

I lodged at 72 King George Avenue, Yaba with Zik. It was where I left him in 1939. This time the place was empty. No bed. No light. No running water into the bath tub. Not a single item of convenience was there. Zik had literally deserted the place in his voluntary exile to Onitsha. It was for my sake that he came from the East since the exile. We enjoyed the inconvenience silently. It reminded us of something. That night in Zik's residence, I wrote the following poem: "Welcome My Fatherland":

WELCOME MY FATHERLAND

Twentieth November nineteen forty-five
The day to Nigeria I arrive
To find if Nigeria will survive
Among the nations of the world
To stand erect and as bold
To join the band of the free
Opening her eyes just to see
The freedom bell on the hill
As imperial forces stand still
Obeying the law of nature's call
That tyranny standing must fall

II

I raised my eyes and there is Zik
For only him my eyes seek
Just to know if he is alive
Tired from war of imperial strife
Around there was Ojukwu on side

The towering glamour of Nnewi's pride
Their curious eyes peering at me
Their minds wondering what they see
Hope and faith combined to speak
Dashing at me with retreat
The warmest embrace I have ever seen
I see me welcome in a dramatic scene
Nigeria welcomes her prodigal Prince

III

Into the city of Lagos we entered
Zik's home at Yaba they scattered
Rooms, closets, kitchen empty
On them all we look with pity
Reflecting the venom of imperial spleen
We set our hands our home to clean
Setting our minds on arena to enter
The bull of force our God to slaughter
The spirit of freedom was charged with fire
Calling on Nigerians for none to retire
Horizontal education I come to plant
Poverty and anguish are bound to part
African Irredentism, my message from God

The next morning, my only brother who came to welcome me demanded that we proceed to Nnewi. I told him that it would be necessary for me to stay about a week in Lagos inorder to start my mission and meet the Nigerians whom I had come to serve. He said he could not wait and he went back to Kano and left me in Lagos. I was alone with Zik and Ojukwu.

My first public appearance was at the Glover Memorial Hall where I spoke on Horizontal Education and African Irredentism. As I came to the hall and looked at Zik, I felt the urgent need to recharge the battery of his political engine. I therefore deleted Horizontal Education from the title of the lecture I prepared all the way from America entitled "Horizontal Education and African Irredentism"

which was the main object of my mission and replaced it with "Zikism and African Irredentism." The Chairman of the occasion was Herbert Macauley, the father of Nigerian nationalism. He was supported by Azikiwe, Dr. Olorun Nimbe, H. U. Kaine, H. O. Davis, Dr. Abayomi and a host of other important dignitaries. Chief Denis Osadebey who was then a customs officer was the Master of Ceremonies of the occasion. Before Zik and I arrived at the Hall, the place, including all adjacent roads were filled with a sea of heads, thicker than the crowd of human beings between Times Square and Fifth Avenue on 42nd Street, New York, in its busiest hours.

My lecture was a vivid description of my idea of education as a vehicle for national liberation, and a graphic, lucid and philosophical exposition of the tenets of "Zikism" as a system of thought emanating from the personality of a nation and the culture of an age. Further, I felt the need of reviving the Goliath in Zik. Hence, more than anything else, I built the entire lecture around his past achievements in a melodramatic fashion. I pictured him (and rightly so) as the central focus of African irredentism, and the true embodiment of nationalism in our generation.

I looked at the crowd. I watched their reaction. Their feeling and mood were expressed not only by their thundering cheers of welcome to me and my ideas of education, rather, I was able to dissect their inner urges through the type of questions they asked. Generally, there was a tone of hunger, in all their questions. They were hungry for knowledge and all its national and personal benefits. They knew that they were not given a good type of education for national development, but none knew where and how to get it. Colonialism had enveloped them for too long. To Nigerians of 1945, America was still a legend, a place of supernatural occultism of De Lawrence, and a home of rough cow boys and unprincipled citizens as opposed to the cultured England and her principled populace.

I intentionally endeavoured to represent American culture and its democratic education in a manner befitting the new world of Uncle Sam. I was angry that in 1945, my own country men had not yet awakened to the possibilities of America.



Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe and Nwafor Orizu on 26/11/45 six days after the latter's 1st return from U.S.A. at the Glover Memorial Hall premises in Lagos, where he delivered his address "Horizontal Education and African Irredentism" to the nation.

I was surprised that America whose economy and intelligence had sustained the democracies of the world during the war just past, a nation which fed and nurtured England when Hitler had almost annihilated all Europe, should still be held in contempt in Nigeria through misrepresentation. To me it was a moral obligation to open the eyes of my countrymen, to tell them all the truth about America, and draw their attention to her educational dynamism which we needed, if we were ever going to be anywhere materially in the years ahead. I discussed what I called *Perpendicular* and *Horizontal* Education. One represented the British Colonial educational policy, the other the American.

But what kind of Nigeria did I meet in Lagos? Lagos was the "melting pot" of Nigeria – if there be any "melting pot" in the country. As the political capital, the leading sea port and nearly most populated city, it reflected the best that Nigeria produced. And how much worse that best was to the worst of other peoples best? How far below the norm of comparative progress that city was? It was difficult to admit.

There were slums in abundance and people took it for granted. There were many lawyers. Most of them (not all) had no pure or special legal education except a smattering knowledge of cases and court procedure. There were underpaid African civil servants who were trained to believe that "senior service" post was a special right of a European employee while to an African a privilege.

There were cinema houses where "new" pictures were those seen over twenty years ago in New York Broadway. There were big houses for European commercial operations set up to exploit the country's raw materials without any intention to industrialize. There were well-trained African Doctors overworking themselves because they were so few. There were very few secondary schools, most of them without libraries. Political parties were yet incoherent. Tribalism was in ascendancy. I did not meet a single person who felt that his economic or social progress was satisfactory, except the colonial stooges here and there.

The general strike was just over but not its aftermath. Its devastating effect had demoralized many while the ensuing bitterness

was being aggravated. The ex-servicemen who were disappointed after the war charged the atmosphere with plots. The explosives for internal crisis were all set, awaiting for the slightest irritation from the exterior in order to explode. Lagos was a city of cynicism. So was all Nigeria.

Listen to one Hausa veteran of the World War II. He said to me: "Sir, me servam Naguria army twelve year for East Africa and Burma. Me was for Regiment wey welcome Emperor Haile Salassie for Ethiopia for im country. Time wey we servam for Burma, Englis man promise we good thing when we go return. I never see any money till now." Another added: "I don ready for die because me no like people wey de tell lie. I don marry before I join army. When I come home my wife don run, my mother die. I de for Middle East, I de follow Englis people fight Italy people. Look now, this Nigeria, I no get work. Die better pass this."

While all this feeling was seething in a well-covered social pot, the Governor, Sir Arthur Richards (later Lord) was unconsciously adding more fuel to the fire. Sir Arthur was a brilliant man, a small-town Machiavelli whose rudeness, aristocratic arrogance and easily-injured vanity blinded him from realizing how fast his attitude or policy was hastening the political consciousness of Nigeria. He was an expert in applying the name-calling device in his propaganda method. He would call one man the "Oracle of Onitsha" and term the other a "self-appointed leader" and still another would be baptised a "rascal" or an "irresponsible boy."

The youths and veterans and the workers became indignant. The activities and tendencies of those youths I talked with impressed me as if they were developing along the lines comparable in some respects to the Nazi youths or the members of the Russian Komsomols. They were eager exploring the means to give vent to their pent-up energy. Their awakened consciousness could no longer endure the despicable government by partinacity. They wanted a sudden flash of light in the social horizon blazing forth with a new deal either from the British Satrapies or from the inspired patriots At this point, in my humble opinion, I could see that my book

Without Bitterness appeared to be widely acclaimed as a medium that has supplied the desired awareness.

Such was the mood and temper of the Nigerians I met in Lagos. And in respect of my educational organization, I was besieged at Zik's house. The people were eager to know about American education. They came in such a number and without reference to time, until even my host Zik was out of mood. He was sometimes an ivory-tower soliloquist who "was never at ease in the world he has conquered." When in that mood Zik would wall himself off from the very people whom we all are out to serve.

In the meantime I felt it necessary to discuss my educational program with the British Governor, Sir Arthur Richards. I had considered the A.C.A.E. a non-political institution which should not be mixed up with any political considerations. Little did I understand then that the Nigerian social thought both of the British and the Nigerians – had not objectified itself to some principles of detachment. Without much thought I telephoned the Governor's office for an appointment with him. A private secretary answered on the telephone, and directed me to put my request in writing. On November 26, 1945, I wrote and requested Sir Richards to afford me an opportunity to lay before him the plans of my organization for the possible co-operation of the Government of my country as I originally informed him from America before leaving New York.

From the Government House came a reply on the same day to say that, "His Excellency regrets that he cannot see you ..."

I was further mildly rebuked, "to seek interview with the Honourable, the Chief Secretary in the first instance." Right there, I remembered Churchill's invented phrases: "A mystery inside a mystery inside a mystery". This must be it. I was too slow to appreciate that I had left democratic America into a sphere of influence where everything, small or big, became apocryphal.

My time was too short in Lagos to remain further. I had telegraphed my home that I was returning shortly. I therefore found it impossible to see the Governor, who, as I have mentioned, was cabled from New York before my departure from the United States.

I travelled by lorry to Asaba. I was met by Asaba Community with music and dancers on the road as our lorry was entering the town. My maternal uncle Late Archdeacon B. C. Nwosu insisted that I would stay with him inorder to attend the reception prepared for me during the evening. I lodged with him in his personage. He occupied the chair at the reception which was grand and enthusiastic.

The next morning, I left Asaba for Onitsha. Looking at Onitsha from the ferry boat floating down the glimmering Niger, there appeared to be an extensive white wall built along the river bank covering from the new market area through John Holt, the British Bank of West Africa, the Holy Trinity Church, to the hanging bridge after the P.W.D. premises.

I began to wonder when the wall was built. But as we came nearer the Onitsha bank, I was stunned to see that the seeming wall was made up of standing human beings in their multi-colored apparels awaiting my arrival! I was humbled – truly humbled.

There was a long procession led by several school bands, marching along in Onitsha township. I remembered my old school days in the Anglican Central School, and what a joy to listen to the rendition of African music in that beautiful morning. The band boys pealed from their cornets and trumpets the blast of alarm and joy. I learnt that the famous Onitsha Market was closed in honour of my arrival. Market men and women were running helter-skelter to peep through the crowd inorder to see our car which was moving at the rate of five miles per hour.

I was totally unprepared for this kind of reception. I had no idea that my activities in the United States had so intimately spread in Nigeria. The whole affair was so elaborate that during my first few hours in Onitsha, I could not make out one person from another, much more about seeing any member of my family. Our car window was blocked with peeping faces. The pressure of the crowd suffocated me to almost a point of unpleasantness.

Finally, after several tedious hours of crawling with the excited crowd, we arrived at Nnewi Hall in Odoakpu, where the reception took place under the auspices of the Ibo Union.

It was late in the afternoon, and I was getting hungry. I had nothing to eat since morning. I escaped to my aunt's house, Nwalie Ebo, where I had my first *Nni-Oka* for which Onitsha women were famous.

We drove from Onitsha to Nnewi toward the evening. The bright African sun was receding below the horizon as we drove past Oba and Ojoto into Anaedo. As soon as we crossed the almost imperceptible Ojoto boundary into Anaedo, I got out of the car and set my foot on Anaedo soil, and I remembered the day of my *Solemn Vow* – when in 1938 on this very spot where I took the sand of Agbaja-land, *swearing never to see Anaedo in my life until I shall have studied in America and back. If I never go, if all the gods and goddesses and the spirit of the ancestors of Anaedo deprive me of that privilege and accomplishment, I shall deprive them of my presence for ever!* Now I felt that my prayer was answered by the gods of this land, and I did not disappoint them.

School children, teachers, Nnewi leaders and populace lined two sides of the road from Anaedo boundary. We joined them with their music and dances and all marched to Nnewi Central School. After a brief reception at the C.M.S. Central School, we drove to my father's palace.

On our way, I began to reminisce over certain things. We Africans, no matter how Westernized, have not forgotten and cannot forget our peculiar attachment to the spirit of our ancestors. We do not forget our origins nor overlook the tap root of our cultural heritage. We attach importance to the meaning of death as it reveals itself in our life. For far above everything else, I remembered my father and his premature death. I had to connect this to the sudden death of my uncle Chief J. C. Ulasi. In the midst of what may be considered a triumphal entry, I was struggling with disorderly emotions of revolt against what I considered an unfair deal with which death, at times, attended us the mortal beings.

Shortly, we arrived at the Main Gate (*Iru Mgbo*) of the Palace. The car horn blew as if a trumpet calling men out of sleep. Every place was very quiet as if no human soul ever lived therein. We drove into the palace through the Motor Gate. I found that the

premises were filled with grasses. The famous barn (*Oba ji*) was desolate and all the walls surrounding it had been levelled to the ground, and it was turning into small jungle. The roof of palace hall (*Obi*) was blotted out. What I saw in its place was a small dilapidated mat roof. The entire view of the palace which I could see at a glance as we arrived looked like animal farm.

The car stopped at the centre of the palace. I jumped out. I saw a gorgeously dressed woman, tall, graceful, jubilant, majestic as she was running in a dancing mood toward our car. She was my mother. She embraced me and jumped away rejoicing and dancing to the brass band music by the school children. The family members started to gather. L. P. Ojukwu, in whose car I had travelled, was dancing with other Nnewians in the palace.

Not quite an hour after my arrival, my mother fainted. That was the first time I witnessed the shock-of-joy at work. Too much happiness could turn into adverse reaction of the heart. I was perplexed and embarrassed to be involved in a first aid treatment which might not prove effective, and an unpleasant thing might happen at the very hour of my arrival. But I was equally thankful to God to have met mother alive. Should anything happen to her in my presence, she would be happy that her only son was with her. Luckily, for me she came back to consciousness. She prepared dinner for me. Everyone thinks that his mother is the best cook. In my case, I do not only believe that my mother is the best cook in the world, I think she is a food doctor who could conjure any kind of food to taste better and behave well in my stomach! She cooked for my father.

The next morning I proceeded to Chief J. C. Ulasi's house, to see the bereaved family. I was led to his grave at the back of his bungalow. Chief Ulasi was an enormous man – six feet tall. As I beheld the heap of the earth and the inordinate length of the grave, I trembled. And although I determined not to give way to emotions, I found it difficult to keep away tears. How could I comfort the poor mother, the wives, and the children of my guardian, when I myself could not be comforted? So I made my way back to the palace, a disappointed man.

It was now time for me to observe and reflect on my father's house. What kind of *Obi* did I meet? I met a ruined palace. It was almost ruined before I left for America. The *Ezumezu* (The Throne) was left without care. No one ever scrubbed the floor for years. Spider webs, rats, and lizards were having eternal picnic there. The frontage of the Palace other than *Iru Mgbo* was without roof. The roof of other crumbling walls was a hanging shred. Drastic and damaging changes were made in the storey building within the *Obialachu* and *Galungalu*. The Middle Gate (*Uzo Olipio*) was demolished and became a highway for all and sundry. The quarters of the palace messengers, or what amounted to Native Administration Police Barracks were extinct, and there was no substitute. A hunter could gamble conveniently in the wilds of the Royal Cemetery. All the servants of the *Obi* were practically gone. Of over eighty wives of my late father only about five were still living in the *Obi*. The others had gone to their parents, and their spacious houses were left empty. No more ringing of the official bells in the morning to announce the awakening of the *Obi* from his bed. No more singers and musicians to praise the ruler. No more *Ofala* festival for the annual official appearance of the *Obi*. All the canons impressively displayed at *Obialachu* and at *Enete* were packed together irreverently somewhere they could not be seen. Not a single wife had elephant tusks on, none was an object of adoration. Their souls were dead in them because to them the glory had departed.

What were the causes of all this malady? No doubt, there were some internal decay. But from a broader perspective, the systematic fall of many *Obis* in the Eastern parts of Nigeria was something connected with the politics of the British imperialism in Nigeria. It was not only my father's palace. Most places I visited in Eastern Nigeria, I discovered that either that their *Obi* had fallen, or was in the process of collapse. The disintegration of native culture which found its greatest adherents among the Ibos, who appeared to be adepts in imitative psychology, received greatest encouragement in Eastern Nigeria. The British officials gladly gave sanction to this ruinous policy which maintained that Easterners had no rulers from their origin. Nothing can be more fallacious than this unpardonable nihilism.

That was the first glimpse of the Nigeria that I met. Lagos and its inhabitants reflected a people tired of a foreign rule. They had fully realized that it was time for a change. My home was ruined by those forces of imperialism buttressed by the principles of internal decay. I found myself to be the same vagabond which I was when I left Nigeria in 1939. I had neither a confident country nor a glorious home. The thing about it was that my fate and reaction was the fate and reaction of all thoughtful and informed Nigerians. Our country was crumbling and the people, and particularly the youths of Agwuna, Enahoro and Balogun variety were ready for action in order to reclaim its culture and unity.

So like Nehemiah, I started my national work in 1945 in Nigeria with a sad countenance for: "why should not my countenance be sad when the city, the place of my father's sepulchres lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire of a foreign rule?"

While yet at Nnewi, Azikiwe planned a grand reception for me in his house in the Upper New Market Road, Onitsha. It will be interesting to reproduce Azikiwe's program for this occasion which reads as follows:

SOIREE held in honour of Mr. NWAFOR ORIZU, M.A. (COLUMBIA), by Mr. and Mrs. Nnamdi Azikiwe in their residence at Abadom Building, Upper New Market Road, Onitsha, on Sunday December 30, 1945, at 7.30 p.m.

Patron:	His Highness the Obi of Onitsha
Vice-Patrons:	His Highness the Igwe of Ogidi
	The Owele of Onitsha
Zeus:	Dr. J. O. Onyeachonam
Mercury:	Dr. Flavius A. Akerele
Bacchus:	Dr. Onubogu
Aphrodite(s):	Mrs. Virginia Akerele
	Mrs. Rebecca Nzegwu
	Mrs. May Uwechia
	Mrs. Mercy Eneli
	Mrs. Dolly Anene

MENU

Azu ndu na nsala oyibo
Tolotolo eyelu na manu opapa
Okuku eyelu na manu opapa
Racine de bette
Racine de carotte
Feve en sauce tomato
Fruit de pecher
Eau-de-vie grains (Manya nkwu)
Eau-de-vie Genievre (Akame ndi Oyibo)
Eau-de-vie Sud Africa (Brandy ndi Boer)
Biere du Congo et Canada
Cidre de Champagne
Ala de Gingembre (Manya osolili)
Port, Sherry, and Vermouth Wines or Vin de Palme (Manya Ani Ocha)
Cigarettes (Ife anaesese)

PROGRAMME

7.30 p.m. Guests arrive
7.35 p.m. *Conversazione*
7.45 p.m. *Ensemble*
8.00 p.m. *Aperitif*
8.10 p.m. Speech on Inter-Tribal Co-operation. Mr. E. C. Phillips
8.20 p.m. Cafeteria
9.00 p.m. Speech. International Co-operation. Mr. Melikian
9.10 p.m. Cocktail
9.20 p.m. Speech. Inter-Racial Co-operation. Mr. Denton
9.30 p.m. Cocktail
9.40 p.m. Speech *Without Bitterness*. Mr. Orizu
10.00 p.m. Dancing
11.00 p.m. *Au Revior*.

I had no means of transportation from Nnewi to Onitsha on the eve of the reception. Just about thirty minutes to the time of the reception, Azikiwe came to Nnewi with his car and we drove down to Onitsha. The guests included men and women of all races, including British

Magistrates, Administrators and Bankers. It was not particularly significant that they came, but I was impressed with Azikiwe's broadmindedness in inviting those obvious agents of imperialism, when he himself was in voluntary exile in Onitsha because of imperialism itself. Tolerance and racial harmony are the keynotes of my philosophy, hence I was at home.

The evening was full of joy for me. But I think that Azikiwe was the happiest of us all. Guests were served with both African and European dishes. Everybody fed himself with as much jollof rice and chicken or assorted types of sandwiches and delicatessen as he wanted. Gramophone records gave us some music. We all danced. Something occurred here which has not escaped my memory. As the function advanced, Azikiwe, our host gave a slight impression that he was becoming a little bit "high". At one stage, when one African record "*Zik Nwa Jelu Oyibo*" was being played, Azikiwe was dancing single. He deliberately fell on the floor as if a child, and up at once – laughing contagiously. Everybody laughed. But I had some misgiving which of course, I did not show. I wondered why Azikiwe appeared a little off the line, as if under the influence of alcohol. His glamorous wife, our hostess, remained dignified and affable as usual. She entertained every guest in her charming way.

When the feast was over, Azikiwe in company of his wife, joined to take me home in their car. As we drove towards Nnewi, Azikiwe seemed to have sensed something in my disposition. He turned to me and said: "Prince, I hope you don't think I was drunk among those friends. I was not. Rather, I was so happy that I could, for one moment, play careless. For years, I had been fighting these people alone. But today, I have seen another who understands these people as I do. I want therefore to show them that today, unlike yesterday, I can afford to be somewhat careless because if I am not there, someone else can carry on."

This man had been practically alone on the political skyline. Not that there were not many patriots of great importance even before Zik ever came to Nigeria; not that the love of this country was an exclusive luxury of Azikiwe or of those of us who decided to give our lives for freedom. No. Azikiwe's utterance simply underlined

one fact: that he was in need of active and loyal compatriots with adequate training, doggedness, and sacrificial spirit necessary for a great combat. He knew as an experienced nationalist, that the country needed such men at that particular juncture of our national history. This again takes me back to the programme and menu of the occasion. There you see Zik's personality in its nakedness – a philosophical rascal, a careless fugitive in his own country, a harmonizer of opposites in front of tyranny, a social engineer whose love for life expresses itself in appreciating nature in African and universal diets as he describes them inorder to give unquenchable appetite to mixed races of mankind in Abadom's mansion. I felt indeed honoured and spiritually elevated to go into the battle field of freedom without bitterness.

The end of my short stay in my father's house came, I had to go into the country to explore the possibilities of its people, and to spread the gospel of Horizontal Education and African Irredentism which to my mind were the most effective answers to all other questions of national freedom.

In this beginning, I had nothing in the way of a blue-print of the program. The A.C.A.E. Board in New York was able to draw an outline of broad principles of ideals we had in mind. But there was no ready-made, specific blue-print about what form and shape our Nigerian Organization would take. The responsibility of initiating the program with the help of some local interested citizens, was thrust upon me.

My task was therefore that of pioneering and exploring; of wandering all over my country to awaken the slumbering minds; to discover latent human energy hitherto hidden by the wall of illiteracy; to find some ways and means of gathering support and establishing a stable organization on a country-wide basis. There was never an organization of this nature in Nigeria. There was none in West Africa. And I did not read of any in other parts of Africa as a whole. I had therefore no precedent from which to draw an inspiration or from whose experience I could learn. A.C.A.E. was a novel program. With this spirit of novelty, I left Nnewi in February, 1946 for Northern Nigeria. My exploration had begun.

Chapter Nineteen

EXPLORATION NORTH

But of one thing I am sure. As long as people wait for the down trodden and the hopeless to produce a revolution, the revolution is far away. Revolutions are made, not by the weak, the unsuccessful, or the ignorant, but by the strong and the informed. They are processes, not merely of decay and destruction, but of advance and building. An old order does not disappear until a new order is ready to take its place.

– George Sorel.

I joined the Northern Limited Train to Kano. This was in February, 1946. It was wonderful to see Nigeria again from its forest region of the South to the grassland of the North. Old scenes and old friends reminded me of the events of 1937 and 1938 when I was running up and down the country on this same railway line in quest of funds for my education.

We arrived in Kano in the morning. The weather was cold. The harmattan season with its sandy wind from the Sahara was still on.

Kano station was besieged by my countrymen and women who came to welcome me. I washed my face and dressed in a hurry and joined the jubilant crowd into the ancient city. As we drove past the Lagos Store, I remembered the day I left Kano for New York in 1938. I left Kano in loneliness and at a time when it was odiously sinful to many that a youngman with ambition should solicit for fund for his education. And now I returned to Kano after seven years to find a new society. It was now a society favourably disposed to receive me kindly and with honour.

Not only that, I found something not commonly present in other Nigerian towns at that time. I was met at the railway station by the representatives of all Nigerian tribes in Kano.[1] Throughout my stay in Kano, I was impressed with the fact that there was unity and mutual understanding among various tribes. And in fairness to Kano Nigerians, (apart from Lagos) they appeared to be most enlightened of all the Nigerian groups when it came to the matter of social and political consciousness as it affected inter-dependence among tribes. They had healthy competition there, but everyone felt at home with each other, and there was love and mutual confidence in everything they did.

I was received not just by the Ibo tribal group but by the Nigerians as Nigerians. They seemed to have sensed my own avowed principle to disseminate knowledge not just among the Ibos but among the Nigerians and the Africans. The reception given to me at Colonial Hotel (Later renamed Paradise Hotel) by *The Union of all Nigerian Tribes* was the grandest of all.

On February 11, I paid a courtesy visit to the Emir of Kano in his palace. The only disagreeable thing to me was the official requirement that I could not see the Emir except in the presence of the British Resident in Kano. When this condition was revealed to me, I decided not to bother seeing the Emir, but for the persuasion by my friends and relatives in Kano. The fault was not the Emir's but the British. If I declined from seeing the Emir, then the British would have achieved the desired result of their policy. But it was difficult to bear the shame and the humiliation, to say nothing of the insult of being introduced to my own kith and kin, to a royal citizen of my own country, by a stranger. The British Resident was a self-appointed interpreter for me and the Emir. I did not understand Hausa Language, but the Emir had many sons and other Hausa officials, who could have served as better interpreters. The Emir himself seemed to have realized the purpose of this "protection" afforded him by the British Resident. But he was apparently under

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1 I arrived in Kano on Friday, February, 8. Kano Community met me at the railway station with Martins Brass Band.

intelligent suspense which was prevalent in this incredible medieval fort which colonialism decided to put in darkness in twentieth century.

Before I paid the official visit to the Emir, two of his sons had paid me a personal visit in Sabon Gari. My contact with these princes was an eye-opener. They were, left to them, free of heart, patriotic and fully apprehensive of Nigeria and her burdens of colonialism. They knew of their limitations in the way of western education, but they seemed powerless to do anything about it for the present.

Mr. Nevins, the then British Resident in Kano and the Emir were kind enough to arrange for me to be shown around schools, offices, hospitals, the veterinary department and other native administration establishments in Kano. By any measurement, the Kano Emirate Administration was a monumental institution pointing to the political ingenuity of the Nigerians in the long past. The Emir in his palace was a complete monarch of all that he surveyed. Proud of his Moslem Religion, adept in his concept of law evolved for centuries and unconnected with the British Legal System; contented with order, tranquillity and loyalty of his millions of subjects; assured of the fiscal stability of his emirate as a result of taxation system and financial policy long established before the British came; dependent on the efficiency of his provincial administration which was based on decentralized centralized system of government through district and sub-district political units; happy in his walled city, the palace therein with many wives whose number it was indecorous to mention, the Emir of Kano ranked among the most powerful monarchs in West Africa.

I told the Emir about my scholarship which I wanted to take to his people. I emphasized that apart from English Universities, there were universities in other parts of the world, and that American Universities stood in a top place by any measurement. Realizing his Moslem background, I added that in American Universities, any foreigner could obtain his education without relinquishing his own faith. I was a classmate of many Indian and Egyptian Moslems studying in America. I suggested that he would do his sons good to send some of them to America to see for themselves why America

was great, and how American experience could be of immense value to the development of Nigeria.

The Emir sàt dignified and collected. He was attentive while I spoke. He nodded his head in a manner which indicated his apparent powerlessness to air his real personal view in the presence of the British Resident. But his reply carried with it an understanding and concern over the affairs of Nigeria. He told me that the fact that they sent their children and law students to Egypt and other moslem countries for higher studies, showed that they were eager to get education, not just from England alone. He added that "everything has its own tirne, and sooner or later Allah shall help, so that my subjects may have the benefits of American education." I knew there and then that no Emir was going to sponsor my educational program at once for obvious reasons. Their natural conservatism, religion, and most important, the British propaganda against American education were the obstacles. But I was undaunted.

One of the sons of Alhasan Dantata visited me at my Sabon Gari residence. I accepted his invitation to their home. Alhasan Dantata was probably the richest Nigerian at that time. His life was simple, unassuming and totally lacking in ceremonies. Tall, black, slender but friendly. He ate simple foods, wore simple dresses, lived in a simple house which was scantily furnished, but he was considered a millionaire. The story had it that he spent five hundred pounds sterling (1,428 dollars) every Friday to feed the poor, the needy, the lame, the blind, the leprous and so forth. His business interests were diversified, ranging from lorry transport to groundnut trade.

What struck me about this man whose cattle trade alone covered both Nigeria and Ghana, was that with all his money, Colonial atmosphere and European economic policy did not encourage him to concern himself with any manufacturing activity. He was essentially a middleman for the exportation of raw materials to Europe. He could found a bank, but story had it that he would not accept even interests from his British bankers for all the hundreds of thousands of pounds he deposited. How far this was true, I did not know.

I told Alhasan about American Education, and how much good he would do to his business expansion, if he would train one or two of his sons in an American business school, and thereby attract American businessmen into Nigeria. His son had told me that if his father would permit him, he wanted to study in America on my recommendation. But like the Emir, Alhasan considered American story a far-fetched idea whose time had not yet come.

As an explorer, I held my peace. My job was to observe, understand, inform and watch the reaction of various classes and geographical areas of Nigeria to American Education. Nothing could have been more erroneous than for me to have assumed that conversion from old ways and accustomed habits into a new way of life was all that easy.

Besides, the Northerners were a very proud people culturally. They hate too much innovation and liberalism. The conservative British Officials had played successfully on those instincts to frighten the Northerners away from what they always described as the uncultured and revolutionary Americanism, despite the inestimable missionary work of the Sudan Interior Mission, an American Christian Organization in Northern Nigeria. These Americans established hospitals and schools. They established the best eye hospital in the whole of Nigeria in Kano.

After a few days in Kano, it became obvious to me that my educational mission would be fruitful only to the inhabitants of the Sabon Gari, Kano. The ancient city and its inhabitants must yet be counted out. The responses from the Sabon Garians, who were Southern Nigerians and some other West Africans, was most encouraging as I have already stated. But in the midst of this enthusiasm, as soon as the British government in Nigeria knew that I had started my missionary journey, they threw a political bomb-shell with an aim to shatter my integrity and ruin the program of the American Council of African Education, before it started.

I was relaxing from several interviews I had with people, and getting ready for a speech I had to make in a function prepared for me in the coming evening, when someone came in with a sad countenance and brought a copy of the "West African Pilot", with

a government notice published on one of its pages. In the notice, the British Government in Nigeria warned the public against a certain youngman with American scholarships. The notice implied that after proper enquiry from American sources the Government was satisfied that there were no scholarships provided by the American Council on African Education.

The question that came from friends in the room was: "What are you going to do about this publication? You know it will go a long way to destroy your mission. Our people worship anything that comes from the government. They must now believe that your program is fake." I smiled unaffectedly. My appearing unconcerned apparently disturbed my relatives and friends there. But the truth was that I was used to colonial government opposition to the scholarship scheme.

What made me happy was that I knew that the government had told the people a lie. I knew the scholarships were there and I knew that the government could not have got the information they claimed they had from anywhere in the U.S.A. I was surprised however that a responsible government could tell such a big lie which they knew very well would soon be uncovered and proven false.

Let it be clear that I arrived in Nigeria only on November 20, 1945. I was in Kano early February, of 1946. Not quite sixty days since I returned to Nigeria. Not many Nigerians had heard me speak on the project of the American Council on African Education. I was beginning to travel to important places and Kano was the first place I visited. I had never visited any other part of Nigeria. Not having travelled widely enough, I could not have organized my ideas on an incomplete experience of the conditions, and moods and possibilities of the people. I knew what I wanted to do, but the pattern or method of doing it was yet hazy to me as it was to many Nigerians.

Never before in our entire history had such a program been proposed. We have had education missioners but not of congruent scope and background as that which I had. Nigeria or West Africa never had any single individual, a student fresh from University, who devoted his entire time to the purpose of discovering and granting

scholarships to Africans on a large-scale-planning, with a long-term view of national independence.

There was another novelty. The idea of American Scholarship was a novelty. No mater how it was explained, it was liable to misinterpretation by Africans. The implications of initiative, self-help or the American campus version of hard work was unknown. Worse still, the idea of philanthropy was in a very infant stage. To suggest to an African to contribute money to a project in which another man's child would be educated at his own expense, was simply not a common practice. Altruism of that nature as understood in Europe and America was yet undeveloped. In a young country like that, any adverse suggestion made against a novel philanthropic organization from any individual, much more when made by an organized government, was sure to arouse fear and suspicion in the minds of the public. It was under such a circumstance that the government notice of February 1946 greeted my scholarship program in Nigeria. To me this was a most cowardly and immoral type of propaganda unworthy of a government.

From Kano I travelled to Sokoto through Gusau and Funtua. I travelled in the kit car of Mr. Daniel Jideofo of Alor up to Gusau. The road was treacherous. Our highest speed was thirty miles an hour. From Gusau we proceeded to Sokoto in another lorry. I had never been to Sokoto before. Like in other towns of the North, there were many Southerners in Sokoto, but not as large in number as they were found in Kano or Jos.

I was welcomed by two main groups as in Kano – the all Nigerian Tribal Union and the Ibo Union. There was also the Nnewi District Union. Each group had made a special plan for my lodging and feeding in the respective homes of their own presidents. I was presented with those three alternatives. But I decided to be the guest of the president of All-Nigerian Tribal Union. I was happy that the Ibos and the Nnewians accepted my decision without taking offence. I did not, however, fail to eat my *utala* dish prepared by the kind wife of the Ibo Union President, nor did I resist the temptation of going for *Ofe Onugbu* (*Mgba-na-anwu*) for which Nnewi women were famous.

In company of Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto and others, I visited the Sultan. I was very much impressed with the Sultan and his administrative, judicial and other ruling groups who were all present. There was a formal introduction of all that were present, including a British official. The Sultan appeared friendly and interested. I was impressed with the glitter and absolutism of his resplendent personality. He appeared to have won the respect of his people not by ukase but by voluntary devotion; he looked very lively, perspicacious, confident and divine. I spoke about my educational program. It was interpreted to him. Like the Emir of Kano he spoke with grace and concern in a language veiled with the diplomacy of double loyalties against which he was impotent to resist. I understood his language, and left his palace with a conviction that time would come when this potentate of my country will learn to join in the harvest of human brotherhood, by liberating the sons and daughters of Sokoto kingdom to study in America and other parts of the world as the moslems of Asia and Middle East have learned ever since. He could do that when he is free.

On leaving the Sultan's palace, the Sarduana took me around the Native Administration Offices including his own office. We discussed Nigerian politics and social progress as we went along. He was an ebullient young man, and indeed, the most intelligent Northern administrator I met at that time. Comparatively, he appeared to be a northern paladin of liberal democracy. He spoke English with exceptional fluency, totally uninhibited. He discussed Nigerian politics and trends with a surprising grasp of political realities. He was not satisfied with the educational standards of the Northerners, and hoped someday, when he got real power, to make dramatic changes, in the affairs of the North. Certainly, he did not sound like one of those sycophants and vapid individuals. In him I saw a blending of progressive conviction with blue-blood dignity. His sonorously sounding words indicated that he had a passionate feeling for whatever he believed. A man of unquestioned ability, the Sardauna was a born muslim, yet he was so well-bred that you scarcely felt religious difference when in his company. He was capable of great humility despite the fact that he was an embodiment

of some authority and honor. He was the son of a previous Sultan, and next only to the reigning one.

The Sardauna was the chairman at my reception by the Sokoto Community. There I spoke on my scholarship program. During this lecture, he seemed to be happy with his Southern brothers in his domain. He also seemed to appreciate the problems of the under-privileged Northerners who spoke during the reception. For the first time, I listened to the young Northerners discuss their educational problems. They lamented their educational backwardness and the intellectual darkness in which they were buried. They were eager to enjoy the benefits of American education, but were held back by poverty coupled with the predominance of Muslim civilization with its relative conservatism.

Those who were willing had no money even for the smallest item of expenditure, and those who had the means had no heart. It was an appalling situation with a pathetic tinge. Again I saw that the indigenous Northern Nigerians were practically not ready for the new educational mission. And as in Kano, the Southerners residing in Sokoto had a different story. Like their brothers in the South, they were eager and ready.

We left Sokoto for Gusau. Gusau was another place in the North where the Southern people had made a bold venture to establish themselves. The Ibos who laid the foundation of their business life here were praiseworthy for their doggedness and genius. They manifested a great measure of resourcefulness, team spirit, enthusiasm and abundant energy. They met the place a strange climate and made it a home; they met the land unlike their own and befriended it; they met the indigenes conservative and enchanted them; they met the community without a college and established one. That was an accomplishment.

Here again like in Sokoto, the Native Administration was very friendly with these Southerners, and gave them all possible encouragement for individual or collective progress. The Southerners themselves spoke very well about "the young and progressive" Sardauna. I was received by a heterogeneous aggregate of all tribes in Gusau at the Ibo School there. I met some of my school mates

in my early boyhood in whose company I made my earliest experiments in social service in Nnewi. It was a wonderful reunion. I spoke on the A.C.A.E. program which was optimistically embraced.

We came to Zaria. It was a home of Southern zealots. Like the Biblical zealots under the Roman Empire, they felt that there could be no two kings – God and Caesar. Feeling against European domination ran high here in an unusual degree. They welcomed the idea of American Education as a positive way of getting the people of Nigeria out of colonial shackles.

The next place was Jos. Again I was met at the railway station by all tribal groups. Here in Jos resided the most sophisticated and professional Southerners in the North. This may be a questionable conclusion, but it was my personal assessment then. Here too, the atmosphere of team spirit and competitive concept blended most happily. Here also could be found in the society what could be called the middle class. By middle class I refer to those who were neither millionaires nor hand-to-mouth wanderers. There were many Southerners here who were in the income bracket of "four figures". The same was true of Kano, and perhaps more in number there, but on the average Jos stood on the top. The Jos that I met had men with "oomph" and "pep", force and eagerness, decisiveness and action.

It did not take them time to tell me after my several lectures, that they were disappointed because my mission was not a business one. They wanted something in which to invest money and not to contribute without some profit. They would support my scholarship program financially but not with the same enthusiasm they would have done, had I turned it into a business concern between America and Nigeria. They praised me for my spirit of educating Africans, but they emphasized their greater ambition to get into commercial ventures with the outside world.

In one of those meetings, there were interesting questions and answers which may help us appreciate the state of the people's minds:

J. M. C. Obiako: "May I ask the education missioner who gave you these scholarships?"

Orizu: "The scholarships came from various American Colleges and Universities, such as the Ohio State University, Western Reserve, Columbia, Lincoln University, Pa, and others."

E. O. Kogbe: "How much was the scholarship worth in each college?"

Orizu: "There is no uniform expenses for all American Colleges. Some cost more and some less. And each college did not grant the same type of scholarship. For example, I got only tuition scholarship from Columbia University, whereas at Lincoln it covered more items. That was why I am in Nigeria so that we shall enrol membership who could contribute enough funds together with whatever the students could contribute according to their individual means before the program is launched. If the scholarship had covered all the items of expenditure, there would have been no reason for me to come to Nigeria to solicit for membership and funds. The money collected by the members and the students would be used for the furtherance of the scheme in all its aspects."

Dr. D. N. J. Okonkwo: "Do they accept medical students on scholarship there?"

Orizu: "So far we have no scholarship in any medical school. There are two reasons for that. First, medical school in America is more expensive than in most other fields. Second, our boys may not be ready for medical schools in America, since the basic requirement for admission in the medical

schools is a B.Sc. degree in pre-medical courses from an acceptable college."

Chief P. C. Ndu: "Is there any way in which this scholarship scheme would help us get in contact with American business men?"

Orizu: "That is not one of our functions now. It is a non-profit organization."

A. J. Udeze: "Does it mean then there is no profit to be made to anyone by becoming a member of this scholarship scheme?"

Orizu: "No immediate financial profit. When your son gets good American education, he can engage in big business and make big profits and establish industries."

R. A. Wright: "No profit at all?"

Orizu: "I wouldn't say there is no profit at all. I mean no financial profit will accrue immediately to an individual. But when our boys and girls get educated, we shall gain generally. It will also be gratifying to everyone who helped others get education. In America many people take pride in contributing to something in which there is no immediate or personal financial profit."

J. C. Rogers: "I think I understand what Prince Orizu has in mind. This is like a missionary organization. But I believe that Prince Orizu is living ahead of his time."

On the whole, I was sobered at Jos by the die-hard business-minded Africans. They felt that if the scholarships were based on business lines and connected with business motives, its finances would be better in the future. I have no doubt that they were right within the concept of long term process but they did not realise the difficulty of immediate business connection with America without basic education. Nor were they aware of the economic imperialism which

could block any effective economic connection with outside world without political freedom which will come with educated Nigerians. Again, like in Gusau, I met one of the four jolly boys Frederick Ikedife, with a considerable means working at U.A.C. He invited me to his house where I enjoyed myself. Then I inquired if he had any qualified student from his family to go to America. He said he had a junior brother who was not quite ready for University education at the time. I was happy he said this. Then I advised him to see to it that he sends this boy abroad for his studies. He said the boy was brilliant and could do medicine or law. He promised to do so. It turned out later to be Dr. Dozie Ikedife who became the first Nnewi man to establish a private hospital in Nnewi after the war.

I came to Kaduna Junction[2] – the historical junction which turned my destiny from despair into hope, from despondency into triumph in 1938. Again, there was Green Mbadiwe looking like a very proud father and prophet. He ended my journey from America in the way he started it. He planned a most elaborate reception ever given to me by any single individual in Africa. There were over two hundred guests including all the V.I.Ps, Mr. P. H. G. Scott, assistant secretary , Northern Secretariat was the Chairman, Dr. A. O. Majekodunmi, assisted by Messrs S. U. Motune and J.C. Anyansi were the Masters of Ceremony. He hired two bands which played alternatively throughout the evening. Guests dressed formally either in European or African attire. Food and drinks were served profusely in a grand style combining African and European dishes to suit every guest.

After the dinner, Mbadiwe introduced me once more to the guests and eulogized his ideals and beliefs as a nationalist. He emphasized that he was not giving the dinner to parade wealth, but to celebrate his faith in the possibilities of the Africans if given an opportunity. He did not mention that without him, I could not have started my journey to America in 1938. When he came to the question of Nigerian independence, he spoke with passion. Listening to Green Mbadiwe, I saw in him that the great Odum family from where Igwegbe and Mbadiwe sprang was gifted with tongue. He could command the

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2 See "West African Pilot" Wednesday, February 27, 1946.

emotions of others because he spoke from the heart and not from the head; he spoke sincerity and not logic; he spoke patriotism and not egoism; he was intensely decent, hence, he attached much importance to his personal honor and the dignity of others. Green in his own world was suffering from global vision and universal dream.

In response, I told the guests a brief history of Green Mbadiwe, and the ancient friendship between his ancestors and mine. I remembered the heroic exploits of the Arohs and the hands-in-gloves relationship between them and the Nnewians: "*Obuluna Aroh anogho Otolo amaa ebi*," was an ancient adage expressing the politico-religious connections which existed between Nnewi and Aroh Chukwu during the early period of expansion, leadership and slave trade headed by the two peoples along with others such as Awka-Nri, Ohafia-Abriba, Abam and Nkwerre Isu. Then I turned to the history of my going to America as I have narrated in the previous chapter. I related the story of American college life for an indigent but diligent student. I pictured the triumph of American educational philosophy in its relation to the poor but the industrious. I maintained that it was owing to my disappointments in Nigeria before I met Green Mbadiwe, and owing to serious handicaps and difficult situations which I went through in America thereafter, that I insisted on paving the way for other Africans through my A.C.A.E. I pointed out that the generosity and patriotism of men like Green Mbadiwe inspired me to a greater height of nationalism.

It does not take a man to go to Europe or America in order to be acknowledged great. Green Mbadiwe will be remembered any day in Nigerian history as a great man. History is not going to forget him. Like in my own case, Green Mbadiwe's finger was in financial pie of Azikiwe, Ojike and Ozuomba Mbadiwe, four among the men who made modern Nigeria. He was devoted to Azikiwe during the latter's pioneering stage in his newspaper enterprise. He supported Ojike financially when he was departing to U.S.A. in 1938. He was the guardian of his brother Ozuomba. Every one cheered Green Mbadiwe when I pointed out that in his humility he did not mention the story of Kaduna Junction of 1938 (as told in chapter nine of this book).

At the end of after-dinner speeches, ladies and gentlemen started to dance while they were constantly rejuvenated with drinks. The intermingling of races, some "swanky-looking" couples, the affability of the host; the spaciousness of the Green Hotel Garden; the ever present breeze coming from the fragrant flowers around the garden; the brilliant, multicolored electric bulbs; the occasional African native music rendered by the band-boys; the galaxy of African beauties whose sight turned the garden into an enchanted little paradise – all made the evening one of the brightest items of reminiscences during my exploration of Nigeria for the A.C.A.E.

The next day, I spoke to Kaduna Community including all the tribal groups. Again, the Southerners resident in Kaduna were more alert to the need of education than the Northerners themselves. I state this experience repeatedly because my state of mind when I left my home for Northern Nigeria was not just to visit the Southerners in the North, but to meet my Northern brothers – the Hausas, Fulanis, Kanuris, Gwaris, Tivs and others in their own home and to incorporate the interest of their youths in my program.

That will also explain my overwhelming joy in Kaduna where, for the first time, I was invited to a meeting exclusively organized by the indigenous Northerners in an atmosphere where they alone met and discussed my mission with me. I had an interpreter. Of all the public meetings I had in the North, this was the most revealing. I was amazed to discover how deep the feeling for social change had gone in the minds of the seemingly inarticulate common man of the North. Most of those who attended the meeting belonged to the common class. There was not a single aristocrat. A poor man in the North was really poor – poor in health, poor in education, poor in wealth, poor in social prestige, poor in opportunity to develop, poor in freedom to initiate. For once, with all my optimism, I found myself among a group of my countrymen whose problem of life for the moment seemed to defy solution.

The intellectual giants among them were a few youths with some secondary school education, one or two were employed in the Kaduna Secretariat.

But the singular courage and optimism of those educated few moved me. They had an organization which they called "The Star-Light-Circle" under whose auspices that reception was held for me. They selected themselves from all sections of Northern Nigeria with a preponderance of the middle-belt region membership. They were unorthodox, revolutionary, unconventional, articulate and wanted my definition of Zikist philosophy which I systematized in my book *Without Bitterness*. They had their vision of progress, and believed that the ultimate destiny of the North was in the hands of they the youths. They realized that feudalism had encompassed the people, but they believed it would not be long when youth activities like a beam of star-light, would lighten the darkest corners of the North and make the people free. Their greatest hope was in the encouragement which they desperately looked for from the leaders of Southern Nigeria.

After the public meeting, I held another caucus with their leaders. There I made a rigorous enquiry into personal lives of the ablest among these ambitious youngmen. I was shocked to find out that none of them could be helped by his family to finish his secondary school education, much more to finance any part of his university education. Three of them who had two years each in a secondary school were sponsored by the Northern Nigerian Government. Even where there was a suggestion that A.C.A.E. might provide full expenses, not one guaranteed his transport or personal expenses.

I drew the following inevitable conclusions in regard to the Northerners and my educational program:

1. Any plan to help Northern youths educationally without the co-operation of the Northern government or the monied class was bound to fail.
2. To send any Northerner to America would involve solving two major problems simultaneously. First, provision had to be made to grant scholarships to provide for everything including not only tuition, board, room, books, and incidental expenses while in America, but to provide clothing, transportation to and from America. This was something which only a government with

public revenue could undertake. Second, the scholarship itself must start from secondary school in Nigeria, because not enough of those I met were qualified for college education in America.

Since the original scheme of the A.C.A.E. did not take such a local situation into account, something had to be done to accommodate, if possible, a few of the enlightened youths from the North, by granting them high school scholarships in Nigeria. How the A.C.A.E. attempted to surmount this obstacle in order to stand by its national policy will be discussed later.

Chapter Twenty

EXPLORATION SOUTH

The earth was poisoned and Jonathan made it sweet. It was a dead land, and he gave it life. Permanently ... Following the God of the Mormons, he came from Hartford to the Great American Desert and made it fertile. That is achievement.

– Bernard De Voto.

While I was in the Northern Region, telegrams and letters poured in demanding my presence in different sections of the South. The first place I visited was Enugu. I presented the program of the A.C.A.E., pointing out with emphasis the fact that Nigeria was potentially a rich country which could discover itself with the type of education which I had in mind. With broad and realistic education many hidden and untapped resources will be discovered and utilized. Man power will be put into proper use only after every citizen has some kind of organized and purposeful education.

During the question time after the lecture, a youngman,.simply dressed, in a white shirt and khaki short, with Mussolini-looking face, and walking in a style of nomadic abandonment, somewhat bow-legged, and well-built, confidently flew up on to the platform where I was standing. He said he wanted to ask me some questions from the platform. He acted a little out of the ordinary, so I wanted to know who he was. He was a practicing barrister. He began in a way of speech: "What I want to say is that perhaps the lecturer mistakes Nigeria for America. Nigeria is not as rich as America from where the lecturer comes. He seems to give the audience the impression that we here are rich, which is quite wrong, you see,

and I wish to find out from him where to find the money in Nigeria to carry out all these fantastic dreams of free education – or Horizontal Education as he called it?'' I gave my answer by first expressing a disappointment that the young lawyer must have been an unfortunate victim of perpendicular education from which I was determined to set the people free. I made no pretensions to be a profound thinker, but I considered this lawyer's insistence on Nigeria's poverty, and his abnormal satisfaction that we ought and should pattern our educational future according to the economics of colonial policy, a sign of ignorance of why Nigeria seemed poor. Besides, my plan was a long-term affair which I expected to take an effective turn within a decade or two. And I was speaking in 1946. I explained that what I advocated was that Nigeria must start by 1946 to train the future leaders in science and technology. These men should be trained in foreign universities with whatever money we had and they should work like their American counterparts to make up for what funds we could not provide. When they return they should apply their engineering and technological knowledge to the untapped natural resources and hence develop our wealth. It would not be until then say about 1956 or 1966 shall we be in a position to establish adequate free education for all citizens.

Money can be made where manpower and natural resources are converted into monetary value. Money is an expression of utility value imposed by man on material objects. The A.C.A.E. insisted that an individual must be trained to appreciate and discover the skill in him and the utility in nature. But the gentleman had admitted that we had plenty of jungle, and yet denied that we had money. I therefore illustrated my point by an example. "Suppose Mazi Uzoma owns a jungle. He cuts down a mahogany tree there. He makes ten chairs out of the wood. The chairs are sold at five pounds each. That would yield fifty pounds out of one mahogany tree. Suppose that Uzoma had cut down ten mahogany trees from his jungle in one year. That would give him five hundred pounds. This handsome figure represents the value of time, energy and skill of Uzoma added to the value of the wood upon which the skill was applied. In other words, *jungle* is money if the skill of man is made perfect to convert

its value. The skill of man is made perfect through education. Nigeria appears to be poor because its citizens are not educated".

The audience was tense, calm, passionate. It appeared as if a flicker of light had lit their minds. The tongue-tied, paunchy-looking lawyer left the platform. He was greeted with an outburst of scornful laughter. That was something very unfortunate about Nigerian audiences. When they disapproved of you, they jeered and booed uninhibitedly. I was not pleased to see the young lawyer booed out of the platform. That might instil some bitterness in him which might blind his reason.

I cannot, however forget that experience for it was a typical example of the problem of Nigeria of 1946. Here was a man who we could probably call an intellectual from a university. He had become a member of the ruling class by the virtue of his legal profession and social background. But his psychology of social progress was built on doubt and resignation. So were most of them who called themselves the leaders of that Nigeria – incompetent, narrow, timid, unimaginative, ignorant, vain. They formed a clique of predatory males, turning the spirit of nationalism into shambles. They had developed a highly oblique vision of their fellow countrymen who possessed some critical temper or creative propensity. They had forfeited their creative gift. Comically stubborn, they had refused to grasp the dramatic events of the world such as the Russian Revolution from an agrarian society to a nation playing with atomic energy in a matter of two decades. They were frightened by those elements of progress which come only through bold and risky undertakings. They were "too wise" to take risks, and too jealous to appreciate those who dared.

From Enugu I proceeded to Onitsha. Onitsha town was the centre of intellectual life of the East, the seat of Christian missionaries, and the provincial headquarters of Onitsha Province. Situated on the banks of the River Niger, it became a great commercial centre in the East. It was at the Waterside that the first meeting of the A.C.A.E. was held. We had a large number of membership in Onitsha. The A.C.A.E. was popular here because parents and students were all eager to be benefited by the scholarship program.

We came to Calabar. Calabar presented a totally different picture. Here was the old capital of Nigeria and yet for all the filth and dirt in other places I had visited, no other township of Calabar's standing ranked it in raggedness. As a city, it looked like a dirty rag-tattering, trembling and ready to go with the wind. It was difficult to admit that a township which had produced some of the ablest and finest specimen of intelligence and beauty to say nothing of the high ranking patriots, could be clothed with so many rags of buildings. There were exceptions to this rule, and indeed there were fine educational institutions such as the Hope Waddel Institute and St. Patrick's College. And indeed, there were several Nigerians living in beautiful homes. My interest, however, was centred on the condition of the average man, and particularly where Africans lived and worked for their existence. It was not my privilege or desire to visit the European quarters. I also avoided sleeping in Catering Rest Houses which were originally established mainly for European travellers. I usually confined myself to where most Africans lived.

There was not a single daily paper in Calabar Municipality, except the Eastern Nigerian Mail which was a weekly paper. It was owned by one apathetic, J. V. Clinton. He was a British stooge and I dismissed all the publications made in his newspaper about my arrival in Calabar. It appeared as if Sir Arthur Richards was in Calabar with Clinton and the Eastern Nigerian Mail with their mud slinging propaganda device. I saw him as one of the colonial effigies displayed on African soil to molest the patriots and pioneers. The A.C.A.E. membership soared high here, and I departed with joy.

While I was sailing in a ferry boat from Calabar to Oron, my mind went back to my friend Eyo Ita and his singular effort to build West African Peoples' Institute. I remembered his bitter experiences in building up the school amidst internal opposition and sabotage by his own people. I thought of the fabulously wealthy Igwe Kalu and the patriotic adventurer I. Onwuka – how they had given vigor and dynamism to this city. But beyond the thought for the contemporaries, I asked myself: "Is this township the famous home of our brave Efiks? Where is its strength? Can this new generation whom I have met represent and supersede the old? Does the Obong

of Calabar still inspire honor, dignity and awe, giving unity to the community? Who interprets the real spirit and spontaneous instinct of Calabar? Is it this Clinton in his weekly paper or is it another? Why should an important and ancient fort entrust its organ of public opinion into the hands of such a dunderhead who, by training and culture, could not grasp the inner moods and yearnings of the real Efik? Who is this Clinton anyway? What are his aims in my country? Is he here thinking seriously about rebuilding of Nigeria? Or is he simply seeking the easiest means of maintaining his livelihood?''

Beholding the impulse of zeal, the spontaneity of patriotic devotion in the people, I felt the absence of any public organ owned by the indigenous Nigerian to give them expression. Days were gone when strangers in our midst, no matter under what guise, should be allowed to interpret our own life for us. I became strengthened in my mission to inspire creative education in order that this type of intellectual reclamation shall come. A society with culture, a nation with its own soul cannot afford the luxury of handing over its means of informing and moulding of public opinion to others, no matter how well the latter may mean. I felt that there was a literary vacuum in Calabar. I persisted in this way of thinking before we arrived at Oron.

From Oron we came to Aba. Aba was famous as a centre of palm produce trade. Situated on the railway line between Enugu and Port-Harcourt, it was a political hot-bed of the East. It did not boast of high schools and newspapers, but it certainly had men and women with *enlightenment, culture,* and *patriotism*. Aba was in Ngwaland, and the Ngwas were a great and virile people. It was therefore, no wonder that Aba became one of the most prominent centres of revolutionary ideologies and activities in the nation. Any new comer would make no effort to detect the fire in the souls of the inhabitants. Being near Ibibios and overwhelmingly populated by Aroh-Ndizuogus, Ohafians and Nnewians of the Ibo, the cycle was complete. At the slightest political provocation, the ''Enyimba-Enyi''[1] war song would be invoked by the youths. This song, when elevated

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1 ''Enyimba-Enyi'' means: A nation as big as elephant.

to its highest emotional pitch, caused men to destroy and plunder and revolt.

To put across any patriotic program in Aba was not as difficult as in other places. Aba was not a timid society. The aged as well as the young were equally fervent in spirit. Take an example of the old man Chief Ogbonna (a native of Aguluzigbo) of Hundred Foot Road.[2] In 1947, he was in his eighties. He could neither read nor write. He could not make one sentence in English that was agreeable to any grammatical rule. But his foresight, understanding and broadmindedness gave nationalism a new look in any important gathering in Aba. It was amazing how youthful and buoyant that man felt, or how he was willing to use the influence of his age and the advantage of his illimitable strength to push the younger generation into action.

Take another example in Aba, Mr. J. I. G. Onyia, who was the headmaster of the Aba Government School for over thirty years by 1947. He was, true to Aba type, specially informed, fearless, experienced, irresistible and politically shock-proof. He himself told me a lot about African education and the crippling evils of colonialism in the realm of our country's educational future. Although he had no formal university education, Onyia appeared to me to be one of the best informed Nigerian educators. All in all, Aba society encouraged everything about Horizontal Education as a vehicle for building Nigerian nationhood.

Lagos was another place of importance during this exploratory period. Most Nigerians believed that for any national program to succeed it must have its headquarters in Lagos. I did not subscribe to this theory. But I felt that it was necessary to make the membership of the Council open to the Community of Lagos. The program was well received. But one thing surprised me. There was a daily newspaper, *The Daily Service*, which attacked the scholarship program with the teeth of a dragon. This paper was harsh, personal, unscrupulous, uncompromisingly hateful, and above all, passionately subjective. I hated to draw for the masses of Nigeria the picture of

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2 Now called Azikiwe Road.

myself as a martyr, and yet I sacrificed everything I held dear to myself as an individual in order to teach men behind the "Service" press that I was a Nigerian, non-tribal, non-aggressive, meaning harm to none, but making humble efforts under difficult conditions to carry a national plan through, in the face of all the forces of imperialism. I learnt later that the bitterness of the service press was not against my scholarship programme, but because they could not separate my scholarship programme from the Zikist philosophy which I introduced and dramatized, on my arrival to Nigeria. I thought that through my silence my brothers may understand me as a patriot who loved our country and race as they did, "in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distress, in strifes, in imprisonment, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings," ... I thought that some of them were Christians to have read what Paul told the Corinthians by what principles men with God's programme do work; "By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."[3]

I was mistaken. My silence appeared to have given the "Service" press the impression that I was accepting everything false they were spreading about the Council and myself. I knew then that the "Service" press had turned itself into an instrument to help imperialism nip the A.C.A.E. programme in the bud, only because of political tribalism. I therefore persisted with much difficulty on a studied silence, refrained from engaging in actual day-to-day press controversy which was the job of armchair philosophers and not for someone whose mission was bound to reflect on the future international status of a nation.

I called upon the Lagos community to take membership of the council. As a "social melting pot" of Nigeria, the members of the Council in Lagos comprised almost all the tribes in the nation. It reflected in the selection of the local officers. The Chairman was an Yorubaman, the Vice-Chairman was an Iboman, the Treasurer

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3 The Epistle 2 Cor. 6:1.

was an Itsekiri woman, the Secretary was a Lagosian and so forth. I was particularly happy about the non-tribal character of Lagos branch of the A.C.A.E.

The next trip was to Ijebu-Ode. It was a common knowledge that the Ijebus were extraordinary people among the Yorubas. They were known to be insuppressible extroverts – creative, imaginative, curious, progressive and industrious. This character was manifested by one of the A.C.A.E. members in Lagos, a secondary school proprietor whose hometown was Ijebu Ode. He insisted with vigor that I must visit Ijebuland and enroll membership of the Council there. We went to Ijebu Ode. I cannot forget the warm welcome I had there from the Ijebus and other Nigerians domiciled there. I was surprised to see many Ibos living there. I paid a courtesy visit to the Awujale in his palace. He was kind and unlike the Hausa Emirs, there was no interpreter for two of us, nor was there any European Resident to play the officious role of a "middle man". The Awujale entertained me and those with me generously, and expressed hope that my scholarship mission may succeed.

Thereafter, I spoke to the community at Itoro Hall. The chairman of the occasion surprised the audience and myself when he suddenly took up a copy of the House of Common Hansard and read the portion where my scholarship programme and my person were discussed, in the British Parliament which stated that a question was asked by a member of Parliament to the Colonial Secretary as follows:

> "Why do the British government in Nigeria allow a certain young man with dangerous Zikist philosophy to influence African education? The colonial secretary replied that on enquiry from America, they were informed that the scholarships were genuine and that the scholarship programme was supported by prominent Americans."

The crowd went hysterical with cheers of confidence in the scholarship programme and promised to enroll as members when the council was established. I was happily surprised that Itoro Hall statement in Ijebu Ode challenged the Nigerian government newspaper notice which greeted me in Kano telling the people a lie that Arthur

Richards government was informed that my organization had no scholarships in America. More importantly, it is the colonial secretary inside the British Parliament that contradicted the British colonial government in Nigeria without my saying a word. I never made any statement in my own defence before the British Parliament answered for me.

The Ibo elements in Ijebu Ode invited me to a good reception, and I saw several old friends and relatives with whom there was a happy reunion. I was also fortunate to visit Thomas Odutola's imposing mansion. The family entertained me in the absence of Odutola himself who was out of town. I also had some talk with Asani Shoye, a business competitor of Odutola. He was a virile entrepreneur with one eye on the skies. He told me that he believed in African initiative in education. After a successful visit to Ijebu Ode, we left for Lagos.

My car was an old Ford V8. I had another appointment in Lagos that evening at Chief Biney's house. My driver was therefore moving what was considered fast for Nigerian roads of those days (Thirty miles an hour). As we came to one market place where men and women of the village occupied both sides of the roads, my driver blew the horn. They gave way, but as we were just about to drive past the market, certain men standing there were shouting at us, waving their hands for us to stop. Thinking that they were passengers, who wanted to join our car, we did not heed them. But their shouting increased: "*Moto Mgbana! Moto Mgbana*!" None of us understood Yoruba language. What they were saying meant nothing to us more than a disturbance to our smooth-running drive back to Lagos. But some of them pointed to the underneath of the car shouting "*Moto Mgbana*!" I became apprehensive and asked the driver to stop. We jumped out. The car had caught fire. The wires underneath and inside the bonnet around the engines were all ablaze. Had we waited one minute further before stopping, we would have been consumed by the flames. We fought the fire with the help of the bystanders. Sand was used to quench the flames. The poor old car was dragged to one side of the street, and the people helped to remove all the sand and the burnt wires. We were delayed there for hours until my driver

and mechanic there were able to affect some repairs and we started off to Lagos. It was just at the time of our departure that we learnt we were at a market in Shagamu.

I returned to Lagos for some quiet reflections. My experiences in the North, East and now West brought out several facts to the fore front, which I could not ignore.

1. A wide spread rumor had gone around the country that the British Government in Nigeria had decided not tc grant any passport to any of my scholarship students going to America.
2. Because of this fearful notion, people began to ask: "But why has not even one student gone to America?"
3. Some well-meaning citizens questioned logically: "If it were true that the British Government in Nigeria would not issue passports to our students, what is the point in establishing the council, taking membership and contributing money?"
4. Others argued that the Council should tabulate the names of all the colleges and universities in America from where the scholarships were received and state in complete details all the the relationship between the council and each college.

While yet in Lagos, I considered the four points made above to be a material concern to further progress. There was no need going further to towns of Nigeria when public opinion had already been more or less settled about what they expected now of the scholarship programme. It was therefore necessary to establish the West African Headquarters of the Council in Nigeria for the first time in order to hasten the departure of the students.

In the meantime, I enquired into the requirements of the Immigration Department and from the United States Consulate as to Visa. I studied those requirements carefully and satisfied myself and the Council members that our boys could go to the U.S.A. whenever we got ready under international law, and with the facts I have in hand, no government will be able to stop the program. I was very sure of myself and the Council. I therefore remained unmoved. I felt that loose talk could cost the country a lot. Concerning the rumor about the non-granting of the passports, I decided to

check-mate that propaganda by performance; by establishing the Council's office and setting up committee to select the students. The first group to go would be the test case. To go around the country trying to convince the people abstractly about the possibility of what they had come to regard as practically impossible would not do. The method could also apply to the next expression that by one student alone departing for the U.S.A., the plan would be considered genuine. It was only when this was done, would it be advisable to continue a country-wide tour for membership and any financial contributions. At no time did I believe that I could succeed by engaging in a verbal debate with the British Government of Sir Arthur Richards which was backed by the tax money of my own country. The scholarship was a pioneering organization without public funds feeling its way among mentally suffocating populace.

Coming to the question of stating in complete detail the exact number of scholarships obtained from each college, I knew that this was unwise and against Nigeria's interest. Right from the United States where this programme germinated, I had kept secret the details of figures and data not only that of the scholarship programme but of the movement and activities of the African Students Association. The reasons are obvious.

My scholarship programme was intended to serve as a permanent, though unseen, bridge across the Atlantic between Africa and America. I reasoned that once I built the bridge and helped a few youngmen and women to pass through it from Africa to the other side, I, the designer of the bridge, and those others who were the engineers and divers and labourers in its construction, might all be drowned; the blue print of the bridge might be burnt. But no human being could recall those whom we have helped to go across nor could any power destroy that bridge because it is invisible in the human heart. It would therefore be practically impossible to stop some more persons from crossing as time went by. That, I thought, would constitute enough embarrassment to an empire that supposed itself too omnipresent as to limit the areas of the earth where Africans must go. If only through that scholarship scheme I answer to that challenge, even in a little way, I should die happy.

But if before the bridge was completed, the enemies had access to the blue print, or knew the names and locations and detailed motives of the engineers, the divers, and labourers, they could burn the blue print, annoy or buy off the engineers and the divers, frighten the labourers and instil fear in those who were waiting to cross. The whole scheme would be turned into a tragic mockery. I clung to this way of thinking during this period. I must confess that it was not always too easy to convey this very idea to others. It was an idea characteristic of an underground movement on an international scale. But I could not quite call it an underground movement. And yet, how else could a poor colonial student face a mighty empire which has stolen the heart of his own people by propaganda and power ...?

I left Lagos for the Eastern Region of Nigeria in order to hasten the establishment of the council's headquarters in Port-Harcourt. Before going down to Port-Harcourt, I visited Azikiwe in his residence at Onitsha. I walked into his bedroom where he was resting on his bed. He expressed some anxiety over the propaganda which was being spread against the scholarship scheme. Zik said: "I think that you could let us have the entire list of the scholarships you have got from American Universities as you told me in Lagos when you first arrived in this country last year. Unfortunately, Nigerians unlike Americans, do not recognize truth in the abstract, because of mass illiteracy. They are therefore easily influenced by whatsoever was the British Government opinion on most matters. And they have not fully realized the nature of the struggle. That, Prince, is what I have been suffering ever since. That is why I am in great plight today. Nationalists are facing serious odds. Many disgraceful things are said against us without any justification. In my case, I am now used to it. But in your case, I feel that you should not allow yourself to be butchered by those cruel agents of darkness in this country. I am prepared to publish all the names of the colleges and the universities from where you obtained your scholarships and I hope that that method may make the people realize that the scheme is genuine. At present, they have succeeded to create doubts in the minds of the people."

I asked seriously;, "Will it be possible for you to let me know what sort of doubts the people have?"

Zik continued: "Yes, being enthusiastically involved in the working of the scheme, you may not have the opportunity to recognize what harm some vicious groups do to your work and reputation. Because the names of the colleges and specific number of scholarships available from each college was not published, it gave the enemies opportunity to spread the false rumor that the scholarships never existed, except those near you or those members of the Council who are informed. Besides, I myself have my doubts, real doubts, if you are going to obtain passports for the students when you go to Lagos. Strong rumors have it that your students may not be given the passports. Now Prince (And Zik's face looked grave), suppose after all these your tireless efforts, all your sleepless nights, and after you shall have aroused the hopes of these students, and you discover that not one could cross the Atlantic, what are you going to do?" Zik looked at me in the face and paused for a moment and then continued: "having considered all the propaganda against your scheme, I feel that your silence must be broken. Let all facts be known. Don't keep back the names of the colleges. Such exposure will shut the mouths of the detractors. At present they make you to appear as deceiving the people. For a man like myself who have stayed in this country for about a decade, it would not matter, but for a youngman who just returned to this country, it will be most unfair to leave yourself undefended when really you have facts at your disposal to silence your critics. And I am ready to give you my own personal help by writing to expose all the facts."

I was greatly moved to listen to this. I was humbled by Zik's sincerity and concern. I hesitated to speak. What he said came from his heart. He wanted to help. His pen is trenchant. His power of argument and reputation is unchallengeable. That he could offer his goodself in such a thoughtful manner to redeem me from the hands of the enemies of progress was in itself an inspiration. I was conscious of his sympathy. His heart responded to mine. I found it difficult to distinguish between my natural respect for him and my personal gratitude – those two intangible dispositions displaced all the attributes

of adolescence in me and made me feel like a child. And yet not quite like that. There was nothing childish about my concepts of the issues involved. My own convictions about the affairs of Nigeria were all definite. Social action to have any meaning must be interwoven with friends and foes. Society is an intermixture of opposing elements. To imagine that the fundamental issue of education, of introducing a new educational concept so radically different from the existing standards; to import American idea of self-help and philanthropy for independent action would be an easy matter, was unthinkable. If it did not meet with violent opposition, then something was wrong with its essential qualities. What worried me was not the opposition I had, it was rather the reaction of Nnamdi Azikiwe that oppressed my mind. If Zik had such doubts about the possibilities of boys obtaining passports, how then can I blame the man in the street from having greater doubts? His idea of giving out facts was sound and well appreciated. But I reasoned differently. So after a long pause, I replied:

"You cannot imagine the depth of my gratitude for your most thoughtful and fatherly advise to me Sir. Your concern for my own interest and for the progress of my programme does not surprise me. You know very well that the whole trend is a movement originated by you, and by the virtue of having shown us the way to the United States, my present effort is merely to implement what I considered a philosophy of education which I discovered to be the inner force that gives America its vitality. With my background, I am opposed to imitators of other cultures merely for the sake of their strangeness. My attachment to American educational culture is based on self-interest, nationally speaking.

It is my conviction that American Education will recreate this country and produce better-drilled generation of men and women who would eventually lift Nigeria to unprecedented heights. At present we have a nation of economic absorbents when we really needed a nation of economic contributors and creators. Between these two worlds, the war is on. You have shown the "light" and I have cast the "Fire". The light illuminates, the fire gives actual heat. People are disturbed. Pioneers are by tradition destroyers of serenity.

You have shaken the social peace of Nigeria, and the patriots have followed on its wake. There is no serenity in Nigeria since you returned.

Now, in my humble way, I feel that no people have a right to feel serene amid ignorance, poverty and slavery. I shall hate to feel that my programme does not destroy the serenity of the people. That is the intention: You paid dearly for your contribution. You passed through the prison gate, you have been scandalised, you have been slandered, your people have rejected you. What more, your property and domestic tranquillity have always been molested, and yet you carry on. And now above all, you want to carry my cross for me. You want to protect me against the hazards that accompany the lives of pioneers. You feel that my reputation is at stake, that the educational programme may not succeed even to send any student to the United States". I paused. Zik looked at me curiously, then I continued:

"From common standards of human experience, you cannot be wrong. Your experience in Nigeria is very rich. Your knowledge of the public is second to none. I therefore must be thankful that you revealed to me the unabashed truth as you know it. I want you therefore, Sir, to have some patience with me and listen to my line of reasoning, and after I shall have spoken, to give me your final opinion on the matter.

Reputation and honour are frivolous words but for the unwary. The kind of recognition I want for my organization is different. The kind of reputation I seek for myself is not of the common run. Some people attach more importance to what others think of them. I am different – totally different in that respect. What people think of me does not bother me. What I care for is what I think of myself and how honest I am to my God. If I know that I am telling the truth and some people think that I am telling a lie, I never bother to retrace my steps.

History shows that the price of truth is prohibitive. Most people do like to tell the truth, but a few had paid the price. I admit that some groups have poisoned the minds of the people against me. They may succeed to spread the rumor that my mission to Africa

is false. I don't doubt what havoc the evil men can do. Some are not evil, they just do not understand. And it is easier for one to say that what one does not understand is false, than to accept one's ignorance. I must confess before you Sir, that what newspapers write and what detractors say about me do not have any effect on me. The public read what the Colonial Secretary said in the British Parliament, that he has got information from the United States to the effect that my organization has got genuine scholarships and that behind the scheme were many reputable Americans. If such announcement in the British Parliament which was subsequently headlined in Nigeria did not satisfy my critics about the genuineness of the scholarships, I sincerely do not believe that publishing the list of the colleges would. After all, the colleges are not in Nigeria for their verification. I am not of the opinion that any miracle would make everybody support the scheme wholeheartedly. No human being had enjoyed that confidence from any social group. There must be dissenters. Even God with every item of creation standing in evidence of His existence, has not converted every one to believe in him.

I am not saying that I am contemptuous of public opinion. I cannot afford to be. I insist, however, that no great idea is accepted unchallenged by the contemporary. If it were otherwise, great inventors and reformers would not have been martyrs. I believe that in every nation, or age, God endows a few of his children with the extraordinary, original ideas independent of existing standards and circumstances. The originality and independence of those ideas make the originators targets for the common herd. It is those originators that people call geniuses. They are always few, very few, but without their occasional appearance like that of luminous stars in the dark sky, the people will perish. I don't know your view of Schopenhauer's writings, but I do agree with him when he wrote": "Great minds, of which there is scarcely one in a hundred millions, are thus the lighthouses of humanity; and without them, mankind would loose itself in the boundless sea of monstrous error and bewilderment .... And so the simple man of learning ... looks upon the genius much as we look upon a hare, which is good to eat after it has been

killed and dressed up. So long as it is alive, it is only good to shoot at".

"While I do not consider ourselves geniuses, I do think that in Nigeria of today, we are like lighthouses. And in many ways we are like geniuses who are glutton for punishment in the hands of mediocrity who look upon us as hares to be killed, dressed and eaten or who consider us something good to be shot at as long as we live".

I am not flattering myself Sir, I know that I am an ordinary man fighting desperately for something in which I believe. There is nothing genius about it, but I believe in my mission as one of the most essential aspects of our redemption. We cannot ignore education here in Nigeria and everywhere in Africa and we cannot depend upon British colonial principles of education alone. I shall fight with all my might to let Nigeria know what America means to the rest of the world in terms of freedom. In doing so, I agree with Schopenhauer that "He who wishes to experience gratitude from his contemporaries, must adjust his pace to theirs". But great things are never produced in this way. And he who wants to do great things must direct his gaze to posterity, and in firm confidence elaborate his work for coming generation .

Now Sir, I cannot adjust my pace to that of our contemporaries. Some of my ideas about how to finance the organization are novel. The principle of working the programme without a direct supervision and sponsorship of the British Government in Nigeria is unheard of. Setting up an independent relationship with American people is something never done by a colonial subject. We cannot set our pace otherwise without defeating the purpose of my organization".

Zik interrupted: "Yes, I know all this, Prince, and that is why I want to see that your name is cleared from the present unfounded accusations. By that, your whole theme of life shall be preserved. Not that I have any illusions about your ability and convictions. I know you are full of zeal and mean well."

Then I continued: "There is one thing which I let you understand fully well Sir. You have carried your own cross. You preached something in Africa and suffered for it. Nobody suffered for you

but yourself. I am one of those who are inspired by your spirit of sacrifice. I am preaching something new in Africa. I want to bear my own cross. I must not allow anyone to suffer for what I preach. If I were not ready to suffer for it, I would not preach it. Please Sir, understand me in this matter. I am not humble about it. I want you Sir to be assured that you have followers who are not cowards. If you have the bravery and courage to face antagonistic empire alone for ten years, be assured that you have given birth to disciples who are equally imbued with a spirit to suffer even greater for what they advocate. For although you inspired me, but the conviction I now entertain is mine and mine alone. I would rather be misunderstood temporarily (and that may mean for many years) and be understood at the long last – may be after a century, than be praised now only to be repudiated for ever in the endless future. To rush the programme in any manner likely to cause displacement of our original policy and set a confusion which may render our initial accomplishment impossible, is not thinkable. If for any reason we fail to send some Africans to America under this programme before the greater material forces set in to dislodge or delay its continued success, our efforts shall be compared to a stillborn babe nameless, lifeless".

Zik was not lying down again. He sat up and said: "Well Prince, if you are certain that you could obtain passports for the youngmen at the end of this struggle, I have nothing else to fear. And I agree with you that we cannot set our pace to that of the entire people in every aspect, particularly in educational matters. The number of students who succeed to go over does not matter. What matters is that some students do go over and that soon. If you do that, critics will be silenced. I never thought of the matter this way you put it."

When I left Zik, I began to question my own sanity. It has always been my belief that the civilization of imperialism was on the edge of its grave. Am I wrong? Why would Zik seem so afraid of the prospects of my failure? Or am I rather inexperienced? Is all my talk about personal sacrifice and carelessness over life or death a song of immaturity? These doubts covered my mind and for many nights I pondered over the fate of Africa. Why are people

here too careful about life, about personal property, about shortlived reputation in the face of a great national engagement, which required a spirit of abandonment as exhibited by Garibaldi, Nehru, Rhee, Washington, and even Churchill? With this kind of seeming preoccupation with self, can Nigeria ever attain a statehood under a single leadership? It takes a special kind of self-rejected and spiritually-imbued personality to win a genuine affection of a whole people like Nigerians. A man who can get all this country under his sway must renounce all personal interests and marry Nigeria, love her like a fair maiden, go on a honey-moon with her, cherish her above all else, kiss and hug her in time of distress, and continue for better or for worse to serve her interest till death do both separate.

Chapter Twenty-One

THE NIGERIA WE MUST CHANGE

Horizontal education is designed for freedom. It creates a free individual who thinks freely. It is only a free thinker who can expand. When free thinkers are many, you have a free nation.

– Nwafor Orizu.

My initial exploration of the country was just over. It was now urgent to establish the council for practical work. Before doing so it became necessary to let the people know of my experiences during the exploration in order to better adapt the organization to the task ahead. The place to speak was in Port Harcourt where the West African Headquarters of the A.C.A.E. was to be set up. In this speech I tried to summarise what I saw in Nigeria and against what social background we were to establish and advocate the principles of dynamic education. I shall therefore relate hereby a resume of that speech which preceded the establishment of the American Council on African Education on an African Soil.

"Mr. Chairman, my friends and countrymen, it was on November 20, 1945 that I landed in this our beloved country after six years of student life in the United States. I came not to look for job in order to secure myself. I returned not to enjoy the glory and honour nature bestowed upon me by being one of the sons of H.R.H. Ezeugbonyamba Orizu I, the titular head of great Agbaja clan of Anaedo. I have returned not to relax and enjoy the blessings of our plenteous tropical land after these years of honest labour and hard battle to gain my education. Rather, I returned with a message from a great country and a great people. America, measured by

any standard, has come to play a decisive role in the twentieth century. My limited knowledge of her inner strength and spiritual vitality compelled my admiration. My life as a student in various universities there opened my eyes and enlightened my understanding, even about African problems.

No one can battle against experience. You can argue over a theory, you can doubt a story told by someone else, but you cannot doubt something which you had seen with your two eyes, or touched with your hands. I had seen and touched the system of American education. I had experienced something of its philosophy. I had witnessed the results of its methods. I had compared its methods and results with those of other leading countries of the Western civilization, and I had come to the conclusion that by and large, Nigeria – nay, all Africa, must learn more and more from American system and philosophy of education, if we are to gain control of our lands and waters, air and manpower.

I therefore organized this American Council on African Education with the kind co-operation of some American citizens in the United States. My aim was to awaken Africa from a long sleep and show her the way to dynamic education through America. It does not mean for one moment that we shall abandon other systems of education, but that we must realize, and that now, that too much of any one particular thing is bad. We have buried ourselves too long in a system of education designed for a prolonged psychological, social and political slavery. American education is designed for freedom. It creates a free individual who thinks freely. It is only a free thinker who can expand. When free thinkers are many, you have a free nation.

Since my arrival in Nigeria, I have endeavoured to penetrate the country to see for myself, on behalf of my organization the state of things, the readiness of the people of different areas, in order to justify the need and urgency of the education for freedom. I have so far ended that trip in order to come down to you here in Port Harcourt, and through your co-operation the contribution of others who have aligned themselves with us in this crusade, to set up the West African Headquarters of the organization. I feel obliged to give

you a summary of a preliminary report on my tour around the country before the organization should be set up.

You all must have read the Public Notice of Governor Richard's Nigerian Government of last February. That Notice met me in Kano just a few weeks of my landing in this country. The adverse effect of that Government Notice is immeasurable. It started my A.C.A.E. off as a suspicious and false organization, and I had to fight against such a malicious and vicious piece of propaganda all along. Being sure of our cause, I preferred to concentrate on the constructive and positive activities of the council, than to sit down answering to well-timed criticisms aimed at making us deviate from our real goal. I do not believe that we can checkmate that satanic propaganda, except by a concrete and positive demonstration. That can only be done by setting up the organization, selecting qualified students, and landing them in America. Without that, nothing can satisfy my conscience.

The greatest obstacle during our tour was transportation and communication. As you know, to purchase a car here, a permit must be obtained from a British official in Lagos. The antagonism of Governor Richard in Nigeria against the idea of American education is too well known. You can only imagine the kind of reception my application for a car for the use of the propagation of the work of the Council or even for myself, would get. But I was not daunted. Through the kind co-operation of my family, I had a car to use for short distances in the beginning. But this did not lead me far. Petrol rationing was a menace and the A.C.A.E. had no money. I had to join lorries and hire cars, and in some cases, went by train or even bicycle.

Means of transportation as a whole is deplorable in this country. The few known roads are mere naked earth. Most of them are intolerably treacherous. In the rainy season they are full of slippery surfaces with holes and mud ready to capsize a lorry or a car at every turn. In certain areas, those roads are completely out of service when it rains. In hot seasons the roads are full of sand heaps. Drivers, passengers, and pedestrians swim in the sea of sand-dust blown up by the running wheels. After riding through those roads, a man's

color and his attire turn red or ash according to the color of the earth. Most people in this country tread through foot paths from village to village and through thick bushes and luxuriant weeds and grasses. It is not uncommon for fallen trees to blockade the roads and arrest traffic for hours or even days. In this tour, I have been more than once a victim of a road blockade by a fallen tree or broken branches. Under rain and thunder-storm we were forced out of our car to improvise axes and cutlasses with which we turned into wood-cutters.

Ladies and gentlemen, I was surprised to see that in our country today, because of lack of adequate means of transportation, many people still carry their marketable products on their heads to markets for many miles, it is common to see where men use bicycles to carry gallons of palm oil and bags of palm kernels to amazing distances. I have seen many of these bicycle riders packed up to about ten tins (40 gallons) of palm oil on one bicycle and pedalled the poor vehicle with agonizing difficulty through long distances of hills and planes, slippery mud, sandy spots and bumpy paths. I have seen women who, because of lack of transportation facilities, carried loads which could weigh more than 70Ibs on their heads. I have been horrified several times to see six-month to eight-month pregnant women carry heavy loads on their heads along a road attending a market of about five to ten miles from home. In Northern Nigeria animals such as camels, donkeys, and horses were in use. But despite the railway from Kano to Port-Harcourt and Lagos, a good deal of live-stock for consumption were brought from Northern down to the Southern areas by Fulanis and Hausa Cattle-men who walked patiently through all dangerous bushes and foot-paths under rain and sun for over nearly a thousand miles with their livestock. Many Cattle die on the way. Many could be infected by disease, and the remaining ones shall have lost the best nutritive elements of their flesh, before their meat reached a housewife in the South.

The most pathetic sight was to observe the truck pushers in Onitsha market – how they literally push some fully and heavily loaded trucks with their head. They will be singing and humming, while blood-like sweat would rain from their bare bodies as the

heavy-laden truck moved grudgingly by the brutal force of human energy of some underfed males! There were areas where the means of transport available were only bicycle. I saw one man carrying three other persons on one bicycle and charged 2/- (two shillings) each for a distance of eight miles. How one man could carry three others on a bicycle, is a queer and unenviable invention borne out of necessity.

Travelling by the railroad presented a more appalling picture. It was nearly a half century since the Nigerian railway was constructed. The main lines join Kano and Nguru in the North down to Kaduna where one line stretches to Lagos, the other to Port-Harcourt. Lagos line is the Western Line. Port-Harcourt line is the Eastern Line, altogether covering a route mileage of 1,903 miles. The coaches were classified under first, second, and third classes, with corresponding fares. Until recently, the first class coaches were usually precluded for the whites and very high ranking Government officials. So were the second class coaches but in a lesser degree. That barrier had been bridged and there was no more subtle discrimination. For the people in First and Second Classes food was served in the catering restaurant car with all sorts of drinks including ice cold beer, for the Third Class, there was no provision for any food services or other comforts. It will be difficult except for a Gibbon to actually describe the awful condition of the third class passengers travelling in the Nigerian railway, particularly between Enugu and Kano or Kano to Lagos.

Condition in the lorry which I have described was more tolerable than in those trains. The seats were made of wood, and passengers and their loads were permitted to fill the coaches without limit to what single coach would accommodate for the health of the passengers. Thousands of persons thronged on each other as if they were Cattle. Men and women and children molested one another desperately for seats and even for floors on which to stand. The Hackneyed engines crawled for days and nights to cover a distance of seven hundred miles, and during this stage of suspended animation, the life of the passengers hung on the balance. One coach with hundreds of passengers may have only one tap for water supply to serve for drinking, bathing, washing and everything, with the result

that after a few hours of the day, the poor water would be exhausted and people would go thirsty. Some passengers who may be travelling with their children and babies usually find themselves in agony to see their little ones dying of thirst.

Sometimes, the floor of the Third Class Coach would be flooded with water, and who knows from where, and every kind of filth would abound everywhere, from the crunches of the sugar cane, the back of peeled yam, oranges, and bananas, disagreeable smell of different tribal dishes left over from the previous night, and eaten again without warming because there was no facility, unpleasant red mouths and teeth of some kola-eaters, to the sour smell of *Nkwu-ola* (over-night palm wine) of other passengers. The restlessness that was caused by unchecked and continuous influx of passengers as they increased from station to station, the nonchalant disposition of the railway ticket collectors, whose fault it was not, but who collected money from those passengers without any concern for their comfort and health all made the passengers in the Third Class to look pathetically dismal as if they were not human customers of the railway.

I happened to know one trader from Nnewi. His business residence was at Maiduguri. He got ill and decided to return to Nnewi his town. He joined the train from Jos with his family. They were in the Third Class Coach. Their coach was so crowded that the poor fellow got suffocated and died in the train a few stations after Kafanchan. But because of the crowded train, no one took notice that the man died except his own wife. The corpse was not discovered by the railway officers until they arrived as far down as Enugu. That would show how thickly packed the passengers were. But it has been said that the Nigerian Railway is the second largest in any of the then British colonies. The gauge line is 3ft, 6ins. There is a light railway 2ft. 6ins, gauge, 133 miles long connecting Zaria and Jos. That Zaria-Jos line was notorious for its super-slow speed and uncomfortableness. The engines used there belonged to the cave men. From Kano to Lagos, a distance of about 800 miles takes about 42 hours, just roughly 20 miles an hour, and it was well known that the train used to run pretty late as a matter of usual occurrence, so that the rate of 20 miles an hour was the maximum. Despite all

these inefficiencies, there were no appreciable feeder services for the railway except a few lorries, trailers, and one or two passenger buses in Sokoto areas for transportation of peasants and cotton to feed the railway. There, "Limited" (Express) trains run only three times every seven days.

Water ways are equally behind time. The Southern part of the country is blessed with inland water ways as well as an outlet to the sea. But the most prevalent means of transport on the inland lagoons, rivers and creeks were precarious and primitive canoes, paddled by hand and aided by wind. Motor-boats were unknown except a few ferry boats and cargo services. Between Onitsha and Asaba were such ferry boats which conveyed people from East to West of Nigeria and vice versa. Only two old boats were available for this service for years unending with the result that people never got satisfactory service. They did not operate on Sundays and Holidays. And yet those were the proper days for ferry boats to enjoy the patronage of holiday makers.

The Onitsha – Asaba ferry was a part of the Nigerian Marine operation which served a few other areas such as Lagos – Warri, Port Harcourt-Opobo, Port Harcourt to Akasa, on fortnightly basis. European firms such as the United Africa Company Limited established some waterway transportation for distribution of its own merchandise. There are a few passenger boats also whose accommodation was more deplorable than that of the train. Apart from a few rooms for first class passengers the rest of the deck was an open space without sitting facilities, open to the rain and sunshine. I remember once when I was in the Third Class deck of one of those boats travelling from Onitsha to Lokoja. There were a few Europeans on the upper deck for First Class Group. I suffered from pneumonia after the trip as a result of merciless exposure to the cold. The unforgettable experience that I had there was that twice a European passenger in the first class threw a half-smoked cigarette on my head from the top, and made no apology whatsoever when he was told.

Air transportation presented a better picture though for a country of Nigeria's size, the areas served were negligible. I remember that

I was not happy to join the air connection between Lagos and Port Harcourt in November, 1945 when I landed in Nigeria from New York, because it was operated by a single-engine air craft. The only places served were Lagos, Benin, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Jos, Kano, Maiduguri. That is two towns in the entire Eastern Region, two towns in the whole of Western Region and three towns in the Northern Provinces.

The total fact was that the conditions of transportation system of Nigeria before 1945 was far below that of any other civilized country looking forward to independence in our atomic age. For apart from the inadequate number of available facilities the Nigerians themselves were not employed in any important aspects of the system.

Peoples' health care and hospitalization as I witnessed all over the country have been inadvertently neglected. I remember one tragic night when I was a guest in a small village during my tour .... A stranger knocked at the gate of where I slept. I looked at my clock, it was 11.30 p.m. There stood at the gate a miserable man under rain begging to see me. My host was rather irritated for this apparent intrusion at the late hour. But I jumped out of my bed to find out what the stranger wanted. He was a man from a nearby village about eleven miles away. His home was eighty miles from the nearest hospital, there was no maternity or dispensary in his village or nearby town. The nearest dispensary was thirty miles away. The dispensary could not help him if he were to go there. His wife was under labor when it was discovered that she was to have twin babies. They trusted village doctors who had no scientific training. Those doctors had tried their best to get the first child out, but the second was difficult coming. And the woman was at the point of death. She had been laboring for two days then. There was no post office from where to telegraph or telephone for a doctor or an ambulance from the nearest hospital which was eighty miles away. The husband heard that I was travelling in their area and wanted my help. He marched on foot for eleven miles under a dangerous, dark rainy night along narrow, grass-covered foot-path. He was thoroughly anguished and his nerves were shaking.

My driver had gone to bed enjoying sweet sleep. He was too sleepy to drive. The quantity of petrol in my car was not enough for the round trip, and the nearest petrol station was over fifty miles in another direction from where the hospital was situated. I rushed into my room and got roughly dressed, got my car started and when I blew my horn, my driver ran out. He and our visitor got into the car. I drove them to the town where the laboring woman was struggling hopelessly. As we got near there, we heard some awful noise and cries. The twins and the mother had died. There was a state of pandemonium. They said that the lady was a daughter of a chief and that that was her first childbirth. Had there been a proper medical care; if the area was provided with a hospital or even a single maternity; if a trained doctor was posted anywhere near there, nothing of the tragic end of that woman would have taken place. At least the lives of the babies might have been saved.

There were not adequate or even a reasonable number of trained doctors to keep the population from unnecessary health hazards. As a result, those few who were there were either over- worked in most cases or nonchalant in instances. I have not forgotten some awful sights at Government owned hospitals where I saw European doctors kicking patients with their boots at will and no one could raise a voice. That had happened at the Government Hospital at Onitsha. At the African Hospital, sick persons were maltreated at times as if to be sick was a crime, and conditions like this shall change quite considerably as more Africans would be trained as doctors, and as some more liberal white doctors are being employed in the medical service of Nigeria.

The European and American missionary doctors were the real pioneers in Nigeria in introducing with humanity the medical services in the country. But their resources are highly limited to serve only a tiny proportion of the people. The best example of missionary enterprise in this field is the Sudan interior Mission in Northern Nigeria.

What disturbs me is that the whole Nigeria is still groping in the dark in not having ordinary dispensaries in the villages, while the Western world has advanced so far as to have spare parts for

humans, transplanting live tissue from one human being to another, and providing blood banks and banks for tissue storage. While thousands of Northern inhabitants suffer from blindness, doctors in other lands have restored their citizens from blindness by miraculous corneal transplantation. We now know that bones, skins, arteries, and cartilage banks have been established, and even in Great Britain a lot of important hospitals have established their own tissue banks. For example, in Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead, skin corneal grafting research takes place; Research in bone transplantations is carried out at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, London, while St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington carries its own research in arteries.

I know of one Nigerian who had a fractured skull. He was rushed from Kano hospital to Lagos Orthopaedic Hospital where only one Dr. Lawson was a trained specialist .... The patient arrived in Lagos during the week when Dr. Lawson was going to England on leave. He told the relatives of the patient that he could not operate on the skull because such operation required his expert attention for several months after performance and without which the patient would not survive. He therefore ordered the poor fellow back to Kano. At Kano, the doctor there predicted the inevitable death for the sick. He was taken back to his home where he died in a few weeks. If there were two expert bone doctors in Nigeria, that life would have been saved.

The food we eat is an important factor in the matter of National health. No nation can build anything on a heap of underfed populace. What we are, the riches of our mental powers, the resistance of our physical body, the longevity, even fecundity depends largely on what we eat and how we eat it.

In our Nigeria, there is no government plan to secure people's balanced diet. Certainly every variety of food stuff is plentiful in Nigeria. Plenty of dairy products, meat and grain in the Northern region. Vegetables and oil in the South. Fish is obtainable almost everywhere. But lack of transportation and distribution system have denied one section from enjoying what other sections have in abundance. Method of farming is yet very primitive and that had retarded a maximum production. Hoes and cutlasses are still used

by men and women who waste their energies where modern farm machinery could do the service more efficiently and produce better results. Neither milk nor egg has formed a part of national diet, except in the North where the people suffer from lack of vegetable foods which are plentiful elsewhere. Housing condition is deplorable. There is an urgent need for local manufacture of building materials such as cement and zinc. I am told that we have plenty of raw materials for the industry. We are rich in woods, and there is no reason why we shall continue to live only in temporary houses which ants can eat down a few months after they are built. We must not permit ourselves to suffer constant disaster occasioned by strong wind carrying away our own houses because they are built without solid materials. We can produce iron and steel. We have surplus wood. We can produce cement. Why then must we live like rats? It is all for the lack of fundamental education for creative living.

Water supply in most places was most unsanitary. In some areas people have no fresh water within twenty to forty miles radius. They drink water from ditches and artificial ponds. The water runs into the ponds when it rains carrying carcass of dead animals, household refuse and other unbelievable filth with it. Such water is muddy and thick. Some people drink it, feed children with it without boiling or filtration. How those human beings survive is one of the things unfathomable. In some areas where people are supposed to have natural water supply they may travel from a few poles to five miles to fetch the water and carry gallons of it on their heads back and forth all their lives. In those running waters, men and women wash clothes, sift cassava, and turn round and drink from it. In a few townships where water pipes are installed to serve the community, it is the same process of inadequacy. Standing taps are usually installed in a square where overwhelming number of people gather together fighting with their buckets and pots in order to get the water first. So many decent young girls and peoples' wives had returned home naked and bruised as a result of fight with stronger men who wanted the water first.

The condition of our women is another matter. Looking at the contribution of women in Europe, America and Asia during the last

war, I was dismayed about the status of our female sex. I did not expect Nigerian women to have surmounted all the obstacles placed in the way of feminist movement the world over. I have not forgotten that not until the end of the first world war did women in England and America get their right to vote despite the fact that representative democracy had existed in those areas some centuries earlier. But I am tempted to remember with admiration the kind of female sex I just left in America. I could not forget the equality we shared in our college campus life, in class rooms, in debate clubs, in driving cars, in political discussions, in swimming; I could not forget how American women made themselves indispensable to the existence and happiness of their men; how their whole life was carefully fitted psychologically to the function of elevating and balancing the social prestige and dignity of men.

They know that men are created in types, they treat each type with understanding and sympathy. With the super-women, America produces a lot of super-men. Behind every great man is a great woman. Where there are many great women, many men will be great. I attribute the limitless ambition, a great zest for living characteristic of the Americans, partly to the development of their womanhood. I do not approve all aspects of life of American women for the African women culturally, but I certainly believe that there is much for the African womanhood to learn from her American counterpart. Our women must therefore be given equal opportunity as men to American education, for even the scholarships I obtained were partly due to the encouragement from American women.

I have not forgotten the role Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt played in the life of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who in spite of physical disability turned out to be one of the greatest among the sons of men in the twentieth century, nor have I forgotten the American educated Madam Chiang Kai Shek (Miss Soong) and how she influenced the Generalissimo of China in national and international politics of China.

The labor condition in the present day Nigeria presents a nightmare. Strictly speaking, there is not much to do in the first place. Employment was restricted to civil service and mercantile jobs. There is not a single industrial city and no factories in the Western

sense. A youngman, after school life, must either be a civil servant, a mercantile clerk, or a teacher. None of these areas of enterprise offers any avenue for the employment of, let alone the need for the training of millions of the unskilled or skilled labor force. The employer in Nigeria is a real boss because he is not bothered by the scarcity of labor or the competition of diversified employers.

The American Council on African Education believes that "uneducated masses make neither good producers nor good consumers." Unless a majority of the people of this country are educated, and sufficient jobs created through industrial and agricultural development, we shall remain the footstool and laughing-stock of the rest of the world.

Another surprising experience in this country is the subtle antagonism from most British civil servants and mercantile employees against the introduction of American education into Nigeria. I had always thought that England and America were cousins. But throughout my tour, the Englishman's prejudice was evident everywhere. Take for example in Kaduna. Mbadiwe and I went around Kaduna for sight seeing, and we came to the Secretariat, then to the P.W.D. In one of the offices, we met a European civil servant. I do not want to mention his name here. Mr. Mbadiwe introduced me to the European, and mentioned that I was a Columbia graduate. Then he remarked curtly: "You are from America?" I said "Yes", then he said: "You don't get a bogus degree as Azikiwe, do you?" I answered: "Azikiwe attended the University of Pennsylvania and other universities too, and his degrees are genuine." As I was saying this, my temper was seething inside. Then the gentleman continued with a sort of joking cruelty in his smiles. "But you know even Columbia University degree could be bogus?"

Orizu: "What!" with a horrible face.
The European: "Yes, we know about all that."
Orizu: "Do you realize what you are saying?"
The European: "Of course, I do."
Orizu: "Do you know the rating of Columbia University as compared with any other university in Great Britain?"

The European: "I don't know about that, what about it?"
Orizu: "Do you know that there is not a single university in your country more equipped or diversified in its intellectual, scientific or cultural pursuits than Columbia?"
The European: Smiling with a sarcastic ashamedness. "We are not talking about all that."
Orizu: "By the way, who are you, and where did you attend School?"
The European: Dodging: "Well, I am Mr. ..., sorry I don't mean to offend you."
Orizu: "You have not offended me. I simply want to know your educational background."
The European: "I did not have the opportunity to go through college, but it does not matter now, I have been here for years."
Orizu: "Thank you, I am glad to know that, and I need not go further on this point, but please it is high time you people in this country stopped misrepresenting the great culture of America. I consider it a matter of unpardonable ingratitude that an Englishman like you will speak so carelessly about American education whose efficiency and productivity saved England not only from hunger and financial distress, but from the military annihilation of Hitler."
The European: "I don't mean to offend."
Orizu: "Yes, but you meant to ridicule."
The European: "Well, Mr. Mbadiwe, good afternoon, and Mr. Orizu thank you for your calling."

This time the African workers in the office were all excited and looked with interest.

Orizu: "Thank you Mr. ..., hope to see you again, and good bye."

"As we walked out from this office Mr. Mbadiwe told me that he was aware of this man's idea of American education, hence he

deliberately introduced me to him in order to give him an idea of how wrong he was. Mbadiwe and I discussed this incident at length on our way to the Green Hotel. I told Mbadiwe how I felt when I said: It was amazing to note how ingrained in human mind prejudice is. Certain human tendencies are ineluctable. Without the American industrial know-how which is a result of their educational standard, democracies would have gone to blazes during the war just past. The most benefited country of all was England, and yet, in the complicated wave of human beings an average Englishman hated the American and his educational system. I think, because he, the Englishman owed American system so much. I am not an advocate for America as I have been accused ever so often, but I made an objection to this state of affairs, the mood of the people, their limited views about America. I shall intensify the idea of American education in Nigeria."

Let us admit that Nigeria is essentially an agricultural country. The agrarian economy is the order of the entire populace. Agrarian economy presupposes prevalence of landed rather than business wealth with all the ideas associated with agricultural life – conservatism, individualism, backwardness and provincialism. Business wealth presupposes upsurge of commercial and industrial communities, urbanization, social and economic interdependence of individuals in the community, scientific research and global outlook.

Throughout my tours, I saw woods, woods and woods again. Like a nation with extraordinary future, the whole land area was divided into forest regions comprising almost all kinds of crops, trees and vegetables which have made other nations formidable and secure. They all lay waste. To a Nigerian, vegetable products are either for food, drink or raw marketing. The multifarious uses into which such products are put for industrial and manufacturing purposes are practically unknown. The palm tree products of the East are used for drinking and food purposes, the surpluses are exported raw to other countries where they would be manufactured into various products and sold back to us. The same thing is true of cocoa and peanuts. The valuable woods of the forest regions are cut down either for firewood or for production of raw timber for European countries.

It is not easy to go through those experiences without reflecting on what science has done for other countries in respect of new uses into which wood has been put. Millions of tons of wood which in America would be of tremendous economic value were wasted here. Even slabs, saw-dust, and chips in other places are of high economic value and no more wasted. But even now fallen trees spread all over Nigerian forests and none would touch them. Certain useful woods are not even logged at all for lack of knowledge as to how to put them into use. What lamination could do to turn inferior wood into a stronger stuff, no one in Nigeria knows. The process of speedy chemical cure of timber which eliminated the old slow "seasoning process is not dreamt of in Nigeria. There is not a single paper-making factory among all people whose forest is teeming with all sorts of paper-making woods and pulps. All papers and newspapers prints are imported. When villagers ran out to admire the droning of the flying ships in the air, little do they know that metal and wood around them can be laminated and used even for speedy F7U jet fighter plane by having skin of aluminium bonded to a balsam wood core. When coastal Africans admire the majesty of the merchant and passenger ocean-going steamer, I wonder how far they appreciate that it is the wood of the forest which they use only for fire making that man has turned into the maiden of the sea. When numerous African Christian converts read their Bibles, I wonder if any of them is aware that the paper upon which the holy words are printed could be produced from some bamboos in their back yards. When wooden houses catch fire and burn down, Nigerians have not learned that laminated wood could withstand fire, rot, insects, and vermin far better than steel, and that despite the great advantage of concrete and steel in house building, perhaps the houses of the future will be floored, walled, ceiled with wood materials which could be bent, straightened or curved as required.

The flowers of the field have made many florists rich in the Western world. No one appreciated the beauty of the flowers and its economic importance in Nigeria where forests were pregnant with numerous kinds of adorable flowers. In every community in the civilized world you see flower shops even in important commercial

districts. Flower has come to its own even in the international market. A man living in Madagascar could easily send a corsage to a friend in New York City or Paris or New Delhi in a matter of three hours. Three florists' associations had affiliated into what is known as Florists' Telegraph Delivery with its headquarters in Detroit, controlling forty-five million dollars worth of flowers annually. There is the British Florists' Telegraph Delivery covering sterling areas, excluding Canada. The continental Europe organized Fluerop with Zurich as its own Detroit. The British F.T.D. covers its African areas, but the Nigerians that I met knew nothing about the economic importance of our flowers. At least I did not see any flower shop nor did I come across any florist in Nigeria.

During my tour, I found that the A.C.A.E. idea of scholarship is diametrically different from the concepts nurtured by colonial policy of paternalism. To the average Nigerian, scholarship means "government scholarships." A brief description of what government scholarship means in Nigeria would help in understanding the expectations of Africans whenever the word "scholarship" is mentioned.

Policy determines practise. The educational policy of the British Empire in Nigeria is:

1. To educate the Nigerians g-r-a-d-u-a-l-l-y.
2. To give an education of how to read and write.
3. To discourage creative education.
4. To delay the process of mass education by making education an expensive luxury of the few. It takes extremely wealthy parents to produce a college graduate in a country where school fees are paid from the kindergarten to the secondary standard. No university in the country.
5. To grant government scholarship only to civil servants for departmental proficiency and goodwill tours of England only.
6. To discourage any tendency in Africa to study anywhere other than British universities.

To grant an African a scholarship by the Nigerian government, the recipient therefore expects:

1. Free passage from Nigeria to England and back.
2. Free tuition, board, room and extra expenses.
3. In some cases allowance for the wife to travel with the recipient.
4. In some cases allowance for dependents at home while the recipient studied in England.
5. To resume or accept a job on return as a civil servant in a specific area of training, without effort or fitness.

These expenses were run from the tax payer's money – the public revenue. Only very few Nigerians were granted such scholarships before my arrival. For example from 1935 to 1945, only an average of five students a year received the government scholarship. In a country of nearly forty million population, only five persons received university education per year! At that rate, it will take 200 years to produce 1,000 college graduates. To go a little further, of the five students who received the scholarships each year, only half that number were granted for degree courses at the British universities. That means that about three of them were expected to obtain degrees each year. At that rate, it will take over 330 years to produce, 1,000 Nigerian graduates from the British Universities.

To go into fuller details of the whole affair will more than justify every statement I have made above regarding the British policy of education in Nigeria. But there is no need. One clear fact is that the Nigerian youth, following the pattern of the government educational policy had been trained to feel:

1. That an educated person was a man who would not work with his hands.
2. That university education was the luxury of the financially great or the prize for a government sponsored sybarite.
3. That to go "abroad" implies that the student becomes a great man instantaneously without any further effort than to obtain everything gratis either from the wealthy parents or from the benevolent or paternal government.

There is therefore a great gap of misunderstanding which had to be bridged. First, the Nigerians must be made conscious of their educational backwardness and the hopelessness of the government

policy and a great need to challenge it. Second, the people must be taught self-help, government must not be considered a Santa-Claus. It is impossible and unfair to suppose that any government could provide all educational needs of the people. Third, it was imperative to establish a sense of individual initiative in the people and to import the American ideal where students work for each and for almost everything else while carrying on the academic schedule, resulting in America producing the first class grind of young people. Forth, I feel it was a moral obligation to awaken parents and indigent but deserving students to the possibilities of obtaining higher education even with a small personal monetary contribution to their educational needs, provided that the students themselves are ready to co-operate by working while in the college as Americans do.

One of the greatest results of the General Strike of 1945 is an emergence of extremely nationalistic youth revolution. Anti-colonialism in temper, heroic, independent, obstinate, desperate, these youths balk in the effulgence of the older and more educated paladins of Nigerian nationalism. They however, seem to run ahead of space laid down by those older and more experienced politicians. They have heard so much about what the young people were doing in India, what physical wonders Guiseppe Garibaldi wrought with the youths of Italy in their movement of liberation, and like Garibaldis "thousand," the youths of Nigeria are ready to risk anything for the sake of liberty. They have read so much about civil disobedience and Gandhi's fasts. They are fearless of the consequences of their action, and imprisonment appears to be the pleasantest of their expectations.

As already indicated, unlike India, the youths of Nigeria do not find a fertile ground for this trend of movement among the more elderly leaders. Gandhi and Nehru and others in India were jail-birds, not so their contemporaries in Nigeria. Personal sacrifice and spiritual mysticism were not essential features of Nigerian nationalism. Actual identification of the leaders with the poor and the dejected is carefully avoided in practise by Nigerian leaders. None of them could strictly claim having renounced all his material wealth or abated the pursuit of it in the process of national struggle. The

youths therefore, while they receive what is considered surreptitious encouragement from the top, feel sadly disappointed to find that most of the political leaders are unwilling to face the music with personal sacrifice.

I observed that far from being disheartened, the youths spread their own gospel with intensity. They enter into all departments of the national life as newspaper editors, telegraphic and wireless operators, train engine drivers, confidential secretaries, soldiers, police constables, labor union secretaries, political party secretaries, customs officers and all such jobs from where they hope to hold keys of information and have access to the masses. As newspaper editors and reporters some of them are jailed for sedition; as soap-box orators some talked themselves into prison for alleged subversive activities and disloyalty to the British Crown. One of them looked as if he would apply a cold blood assassination with a knife or a gun in an open day. He would never deny his intention before the British court in Nigeria and would welcome the prison gate with impunity in order to gain freedom. Their gospel captured the imagination of young peoples everywhere in Nigeria covering East, West, and North. One of the expressions of their philosophy is a willingness to suffer, to loose their jobs and go hungry. Some of them practise personal purification and asceticism. You find the most serious among them with long beards, practising fasting, avoiding sex matters, rejecting all European dresses, and becoming vegetarians.

In my tour, I came in contact with those youths. To brand them communists, is totally wrong. To dismiss them as empty dreamers is to ignore the truth. To interpret their activities as ill-motivated is to confuse the issue. To suppress their philosophy is to bay the moon. Truth is that the youths of Nigeria whom I met are really from responsible homes with a fine background of cultural training. Like African children, they have learned to obey and trust their elders and superiors. They are strongly rooted in the traditions of personal freedom and individualism of agrarian society. As they grew their parents must have been telling them about our past glory and heritage and what damage the Europeans have done to them.

Any Nigerian from a good home knows how the illiterate parents sing and lament this idea of foreign domination in the ears of their sons. Most of those youths suffered a lot to get a little education. They must have yearned for more and discovered that they could not get what they wanted because of poverty. Some of them were brought up as Christians. They might have read the story of young David and the giant Goliath; how with a pebble, a shepherd youngster, totally unprotected, was able to kill a great general of an army of the Philistines. Young Africans are essentially religious. They believe that God's purpose is to be fulfilled in Nigeria through them.

These young Africans believe in their relationship with God. They act everywhere as members of a spiritual community. They are committed to the task of awakening a like faith in other renascent Africans, and make them a part of an organic social solidarity. Each one of them possesses a unique value, indispensable to the attainment of freedom in our only political aim. To them it is a big spiritual issue. They want a democracy that awakens a sense of our individual rights and imposes a corresponding sense of obligation. They want to suffer for the cause of that democracy. They do not want to stop at talking. They would rather begin with the inalienable fact of spiritual worth as the central feature of Nigerian democracy, not limited only to soap-box oratory, but securing opportunities for personal security and privileges. Those youths have wants and needs. They must have food and clothes and houses. They must enjoy the fair share of Africa's earth and its products. But those things, they believe, must not obscure the pursuit of democracy. They refuse to accept that the African is a tool for others' happiness. They now realized Nigeria's intrinsic worth, and our own potential energies. They will fight for the construction of a new society in this Nigeria, whatever it may cost life or death – makes no difference to them.

Another characteristic feature of the yearnings of the youths is their great thirst for education. Much has happened in the world which aroused the interest of the citizens of Nigeria in education. The First and Second World Wars have blasted space and shortened all dimension in time. As already mentioned, students have been sent to England to qualify for law in eighteen months for courses

which would take three years to complete. Young soldiers have traversed seas and lands of other continents and discovered new ways and new trends the world over. Extravagant promises of the war lords concerning the aims of the war in terms of democracy and human freedom lingered in the minds of the expectant young generation. A handful of youngmen and women who were privileged to study in foreign universities had the last say in the matters of social function. This changing scene did not escape the observation of the youths. They want to add strings of academic degrees to their names. Some of my personal experiences with the way and manner the youths seek after education in Nigeria is unbelievable. It is a story a proud citizen of Africa would not tell in detail without restraint. It is however pertinent to note that our youths were ready to go to any length to get a real education in a world of international upheaval and an unending scientific discoveries. All the letters, telegrams, interviews, discussions which I had are a series of incredible pathetic stories of orphanage, poverty, illiteracy, suppression, mal-content. They form a potpourri of social ingredients from which the national body is educationally under-nourished. Youngsters turned into beggars – they are begging to drink even the waste of knowledge, and there is none to listen. The Government Policy is already defined, and the general run of events and economic development of the country is not a fertile ground for philanthropy.

I have ignored mentioning that a handful of those youths seemed to be interested in communism. But close observation will indicate clearly that they are more anti-colonialism than pro- Russia.

As you all know, the A.C.A.E. has a national outlook with a view to consider the interest of every Nigerian without regard to tribe or sex. I was therefore dismayed when I found out that we shall face a tremendous obstacles in getting qualified students from certain sections, particularly in the North. I also noted that there are thousands of deserving youngmen and women who came from poor families. Our mission is mainly for the poor and the underprivileged. There is no sound reason to concentrate on granting our scholarships to the children of those parents who could train them without our aid. But we have to seek the co- operation of the

wealthy or else, even the A.C.A.E. will not have any financial foundation upon which to help the poor. In a country where selfishness has appeal over altruism and philanthropy, such a situation may create its own difficulties, but I hope that once the organization is set up, we shall face it courageously.

As soon as we set up the organization, our first job is to set up a Committee to select the first batch of students who would immediately proceed to the United States. I think that that is what the country wants of us. I know that that is what will silence our critics. For, no matter how much criticism was levelled on us, we must not yield to those who think that Africa shall remain in darkness, and that our young generation must be limited in movement as to where they must go and where they must not go around this God-given earth.

We must break through all barriers with all the spiritual courage that God has given us in order to recreate our society. For with all my national pride when I was in the United States, with all my high hopes and great dreams, with all my confidence in the possibilities of our new generation, I was hard-hit with naked realities that stood out prominently when I surveyed the Nigeria of today.

It is a country where ill-smelling, unventilated huts are roofed with dry and highly flammable grasses and floors level with surrounding grounds allowing centipedes, scorpions and snakes to interchange beds and drinking cups with human beings. Filthy atmosphere such as this is inhabited by a population of citizens whose medical service is equally inadequate both in number of doctors and quality and quantity of equipments. Women give birth to still-born babes which are constantly thrown into the bushes and not even honourably buried. A few living babies sucked the nipples of underfed and over-worked mothers. Human refuse are carried on the heads by Africans even under rain and storm for a few pennies a day.

Foreign capitalists mined the ores, acquiring concessions. Industrial enterprise and business expansion of the Africans are fettered. If the backwardness of the people is an accidental sequence of their social growth, the backwardness of the younger generation issues from a deliberate hindrance. Shamefully, low wages

presupposes a low level of life. Extremely bad roads and absence of proper means of communication means stagnation and death. Absence of public schools means enthronement of ignorance and fear. Neither the mind nor the body can develop in an atmosphere of squalor and filth, nor can a nation produce creative spirit where there is not municipal conscience, no public or club, or private libraries, no theatre, no garden, no magazines, no organized music. The most educated citizens of Islam culture, rich and noble as they are, mingled with lepers, and enjoyed the company of house flies and mosquitoes. Like many Nigerians, they live in stuffy bedrooms, on wooden bedsteads infested with bugs. Their children keep in dirty rooms and wives cook in unsanitary kitchens. Such is the condition in which we are expected to leave our country and our people. Such is the condition which we must leave unchallenged with education because we are poor. I feel that poverty cannot stop us from getting education if we only train our people to work for education itself.

I must ask you to be grateful to American citizens who co-operated with me to make the program of the A.C.A.E. possible. Many white and black Americans are in sympathy with Africans when properly informed. Their main obstacle is deliberate misinformation about Africa and the Africans which come to them daily from our European "protectors." But there would have been no A.C.A.E. without men like Dr. Howard Bevis, the President of the Ohio State University, Dr. Horace Mann Bond, the President of Lincoln University, Dr. Charles Wesley, the President of Wilberforce University, Mrs. Eileen J. Garrett of the Creative Age Press, Henry A. Wallace, the former Vice- President of the United States of America, Dr. George Pegram, Dean of Graduate School Columbia University, George S. Schuyler of the "Pittsburgh Courier," A. A. Austin of Antilean Holding Company, Michael L. Kaplan a Jewish millionaire, and Roy Wilkins of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples, who is one of the most powerful forces in African American life. These friends and others whom I could not mention here, not because they have contributed less, will always be remembered by Africa when our true history will be told.

Even at this initial stage, many Nigerians have come forward from all the places I have visited to co-operate with the A.C.A.E. From Kano to Calabar, from Lagos to Onitsha we already have patriotic Africans who have pledged themselves to this great cause. They are waiting for us to make a move and they will join our march to victory. We are facing obstacles. We shall face more and more obstacles. But I have confidence in our cause. I have trust in Nigeria. I have faith in God".

Chapter Twenty-Two

EXODUS

Scotland was never wealthy: yet she has supported four universities ever since the Renaissance... with tales of peasant boys reared in grinding poverty ... Still winning their way to college, living there on a sack of oatmeal... rising to distinction as scholars and inventors.

– Professor Gilbert Highet.

The people of Port Harcourt demanded that my A.C.A.E. should have its headquarters in their garden city. They promised to give it the needed support. This city had the enchantment and romance of a planned municipality, free from repellent, perfidious and artificial qualities of an old city. It was a new city full of promising and eager citizens. There was no doubt that from among the people of Port Harcourt, a cross-section of the finest specie of all that Nigeria bred could be found. All and more, made up this new African cosmopolitan which might be another future San Francisco on this side of the Atlantic.

The official opening of the offices of the A.C.A.E. took place on July 26, 1946, beginning with Dedication Service at 3.30 p.m. at 191 Victoria Street, where the headquarters was located. Among the participants in the Dedication ceremony which was conducted by the Rev. James E. Ibeneme[1] were Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Professor

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1 Rev. James E. Ibeneme happened to be one of the men who prophesied my birth ever before my mother became pregnant and prayed for it. It is an issue of historical significance that this same personage officiated on the occasion of my giving birth to a monumental programme for Africa which was a part of his prophesy.

Eyo Ita, the Rev L. R. Potts-Johnson. Doors leading to the offices and the A.C.A.E. Library were ceremoniously opened by those distinguished guests.

After the formal opening, over five thousand people thronged outside and listened to the addresses of those able patriots. All the native dances in Port Harcourt appeared in groups of colourful arrays. Brass Band music from Port Harcourt, Aba and Onitsha alike played without stop. Hausa rulers of Onitsha and Port Harcourt communities came in their pomp with their classical music. All the streets were covered with excited populace. All traffic regulations were ignored. Human beings on the streets were too many to be controlled. Market men and women all joined in one acclaim. The populace was entertained with a football match by the A.C.A.E.

The Board of the A.C.A.E. announced their decision to establish "The Herbert Macauley Scholarship." This scholarship was established in honour of a Nigerian who became the first nationalist of importance in Nigeria.

I recommended to the Board of the A.C.A.E. to establish in his name a secondary school scholarship for any young boy who may succeed in a competitive examination, to attend a secondary school in Nigéria at the expense of the Council till he graduated, provided that he continued to keep up a satisfactory academic record. The Board of examiners was requested to set up the examination questions. This board included in its membership, Professor Eyo Ita, of W.A.P.I. (West African Peoples Institute), P. E. Chukwurah of Africa College and Iwarime Jaja, the A.C.A.E. General Secretary. The recipient of the scholarship was one Owerri boy called Godfrey Akahara. He was a fine intelligent young man with all the promise of a youthful activist.

Now that the Council was established, several committees were set up for special purposes. The function of the Board of Examiners was to interview all applicants and recommend them to the Advisory Board, for confirmation, before the Executive Board took up the arrangements for the students' scholarship.

At the time of the formal opening of the A.C.A.E., we already had several branches in Aba, Calabar, Onitsha, Enugu, Kano, Jos,

Gusau, Zaria, Minna, Ijebu-Ode, Lagos and other places. Representatives of all those branches attended the establishment ceremony. On Sunday, July 28, 1946 there was a national meeting of all the members of the Council from these branches. The basic business of that meeting was to discuss and decide on the method of selecting our students. There was a unanimous feeling that no time should be wasted in sending out first batch of the students.

On November 4, 1946, we received a copy of a letter addressed to the American Consulate in Lagos on our behalf. It stated that Lincoln University had offered admission to the following students on our scholarship program:

(1) Olisama D. Ndukwe
(2) Nnabugwu J. Alozie
(3) Okechukwu J. Anisiobi
(4) Chukwunyelu Vincent Ikeotuonye
(5) Oku Ekpenyon Oku
(6) Ifekwunigwe S. Aro
(7) H. M. Bluejack
(8) Enyinnaya Nnochiri
(9) Felix Okafor Ifediora
(10) Chukwudebelu P. Odeluga

I proceeded at once to Lagos to arrange for the departure of these boys. All the students involved were summoned to Lagos for checking up. We were disappointed that Oku Ekpenyon Oku and H. M. Bluejack of Efik and Rivers Provinces respectively did not appear because of their inability to raise elementary transport fare which was mandatory for every student to produce. We made impromptu plans to select two other students to substitute them. I spared a few days to lecture them on the life of America. But I could see some impatient look on the faces of most of them. They were too anxious just to leave for the U.S.A., and cared too little about the future. That was natural.

But I felt it was my duty to point out to them the following relevant information on what to expect in America:



Seated with me here were the Lagos branch executive of the ACAE and the first batch of students as they were about to leave Nigeria for U.S.A. They include Olisama D. Ndukwe, Nnabugwu Alozie, Okechukwu J. Anisiobi, Vincent C. Ikeotuonye, Oku Epenyong Oku, Ifekwunigwe S. Aro, H.M. Bluejack, Enyinnaya Nnochiri, Felix Okafor Ifediora and Chukwude P. Odeluga.

(1) That the council's scholarship will not cover all aspects of expenses required by a student in America. That the council will help by providing work for the students under its auspices. This is what Americans call work-study program which is a privilege in America. I made it clear to them that in our colonial status this privilege must be taken in order that Africans would ever study in America at that time. That the council's scholarship does not cover tuition, board, clothing, personal expenses, summer vacations and transport inside America. Since the government of Nigeria is unhappy with the introduction of American education in Nigeria and therefore could not support any of them with tax money nor do Nigerian parents have enough money to "foot" high standard of living in America, the A.C.A.E. scholarship was to reduce these expenses to the minimum, so that whatever small contributions the parents could make the student would engage in work/study program which is a common and proud heritage of American educational system. What my council scholarship had done for African students is to secure admission in American universities and colleges without their own efforts or that of their parents.

(2) That tuition scholarships were already obtained without their efforts or that of their parents.

(3) That the universities agreed before their arrival into the colleges, to provide jobs for them to make up for their financial differences where necessary, again without their efforts or that of their parents.

(4) The A.C.A.E. obtained their passports and visas without their efforts or that of their parents.

The next morning of that early February day, 1947, I was telephoned by the shipping company that the ship was leaving for New York and could accommodate two students. From the list of the boys, the shipping company chose the first two in the list who were Olisama Ndukwe and Ifekwunigwe Aroh. The rest should wait for the next boat. In joy all the students and the A.C.A.E. members joined me

at the Apapa Wharf where we saw the "first fruits of Achea" leave the shores of Nigeria.

I remained in Lagos awaiting for the departure of the others. In the meantime, the news of the departure of the two students was flashed all over the newspapers of the country. The names of the rest of the students who were to leave shortly were also announced stating that they were proceeding to Lincoln University. The country was alerted.

Three days after, the shipping company telephoned suddenly to announce the readiness of the last boast to leave for New York. The students lodged in different areas of Lagos. I drove to find them out one by one. One of them who lodged at Ebute-Metta was sleeping in his bed when I knocked at his door. It took me time to wake him. When he got up he said he had not packed his things. I got into his room, packed his things, while he was putting up his dresses. I carried two of his boxes myself to my car, and we all rushed to the boat. They got into the boat in the presence of the Lagos executives and members of the Council and some relatives of the students. The names of the students were: Vincent Ikeotuonye, N. N. Alozie, Enyinnaya Nnochiri, Harold Onyemelukwe, Chukwudebelu Odeluga, John Anisiobi, and Ndukwe Obi.

Before the boys actually left, I had packed over to Ritz Hotel in Lagos to enable me deal with the matters more promptly, and to enjoy their African food which was not served in other hotels. The expenses at other hotels was too much for me and the diet was not that good for my purposes. Ritz Hotel charged moderately, while I enjoyed their dishes more.

One afternoon as I was sitting in one of the chairs in the rest room of the hotel, a Syrian roughly dressed, walked in and with all rudeness of a drunkard, sat by my side on the same chair. I was disgusted but I remained cool. Then he started this way:

Syrian: "Hei, what is your name?"
Orizu: "My name is Orizu."
Syrian: "Oh! Are you the Orizu?"
Orizu: "Yes."

Syrian: "Are you a lawyer?"
Orizu: "Sorry I am not a lawyer."
Syrian: "You are a lawyer, I say!"

I looked at him in amazement and nearly left the chair.
Syrian: "Answer me, you! You are a lawyer. Are you not?"
I looked at the Syrian with silent surprise and suspicion.
Syrian: "You must say, you are a lawyer – you...!"
Orizu: "Please I am not a lawyer, I am Orizu."
Syrian: "All right, since you don't tell me.. I'll show you."

Then the Syrian staggered into his room which was opposite the parlour. I watched him. He raised the mattress of his bed and brought out a revolver. He put it under his coat and still murmuring against my not admitting to be a lawyer. As he replaced the mattress and turned his way towards the parlour where I sat, I fled away. I picked up a telephone and called the police, and hid myself away. Not long after, the Syrian was arrested. He alleged that he just returned from the house of a prominent high official of the police – Mr. Agbabiaka and that he would say nothing until he saw that officer. I did not understand why this reference to one Agbabiaka. Immediately he said that, I became apprehensive and telephoned the press so that nothing could be suppressed hitherto.

A lot of implications developed later. There appeared some hush hush, but the police Inspector – Inspector Oli, a native of Agulu in Awka Local Government and his group, who arrested him, took him to the police station. I was called to make a statement, and later for the first time, appeared as a crown witness at St. Anna Court, in Lagos. I told the police that I did not want to go further with the case. The police were not happy with my disposition. But I insisted that I would not return as a crown witness before I left them. Whether they later convicted the man, I did not care to know.

The departure of the students to the United States and its consequent psychological effect made me so happy that this affair of "an assassination attempt" on my life was insignificant to me. Besides, I hated to impress upon the public that my life was sought after, or that I was a martyr. I am a trained student of imperialistic

intelligence and I knew the fate of those who dared to confront them effectively. I knew I was one. But I trusted my God more than I feared human conspiracy.

For example, having read the publication on this incident, one of my life-long friends among others, wrote a letter dated February 8, 1947 which reads as follows:

"I read with much horror the incident that confronted you at Lagos from one of the evil multipliers. My nerves shivered and all of a sudden, I was seized with that type of bellicose melancholy characteristic of our fathers. Nothing but to fight and die took grip of me as if the act had been completed. After almost half an hour, I breathed a sigh of relief and stretched out my hands to heaven thanking God for His great mercy. Dear me! What might have been the fate of this country by now had the hands of the wicked moved according to his plan? I dare say that another world war might have started from Nigeria, for I know that by now, majority of the whites in our midst might have gone to serf. Believe me dianyi, God had averted the tragedy because He knew how far-reaching the consequences thereof might have been. And in your silent hour of meditation, don't fail to thank Him not only for your life that was saved but also for the lives of others that might have followed yours.

I shall be very grateful to you if you can spare your time to give me a gist of the whole event and what the end of the matter is after the police investigation.

I shall seize this chance to congratulate you for your great success in despatching the first batch of students to the U.S.A. It is a great achievement and whoever says it is not, let him plan his own and carry it through so that we see. Congrats! You have done your duty. I appreciate the difficulties surrounding your selection however, let me know what you still think about me.,."

Please reply
E. O. Momah

Those things do not appeal to me. So I did not capitalize on the event, even after I had learnt a lot that could have frightened and shaken anyone, or aroused my friends and patriots.

All the fears entertained by my nationalist friends because of the organized rumours by colonial stooges and enemies of American Education that not a single student can ever leave Nigeria on Orizu scholarship and that there was no scholarship in America as Orizu claimed, were drowned in the sea in a twinkling of an eye. I received hundreds of congratulatory telegrams entreating me to continue with courageous candour in defiance of imperialism and their African stooges in order to free the minds of the new generation in Africa. After this triumphant departure of the first group of boys to America, I returned to the East. While I was at Nnewi, an official representative of the Federal Union Executive of the Ibo Union, Mr. B. O. N. Eluwa, was sent to me by the Federal Union's executive with a historic message. Mr. Eluwa said, "the Ibo Union has changed its nomenclature and is now reorganised and known as "Ibo State Union" and they had decided to make you the first President of the Ibo State Union".

I was indeed flattered and humbled when I realized that Ibo population at that time was a little higher or at least equal to that of the then Gold Coast (Now Ghana). Now that the Ibos consider themselves not just a mere Union but an Ibo State Union, I said to myself, were Ibo Nation not inside Nigeria, I would have considered myself being called upon to be the first President of Ibo nation; just as Nkrumah was called the president of Ghana eight years later in 1957. But my Ibo is a part of the greatest and most populous nation in black Africa. I knew that there were some reasons for this decision by the Ibos but an eminent patriot told me that one of the immediate reasons that influenced this noble and unexpected honour was because of my struggle to liberate the African mind through horizontal education when the first ten Nigerians (out of the 150) left Lagos last February after all the threats and rumours.

When Mr. B. O. N. Eluwa the then Assistant Secretary of the Ibo State Union therefore relayed this message to me in my father's palace in mid 1947, I expressed my gratitude and respects to the Union. Mr. Eluwa himself was a known supporter of Horizontal Education and we discussed and agreed that my commitment to education was overwhelming but that I must find a way to accept

this offer which as a matter of fact must be considered a part of the nation building we so much desired. Shortly after Eluwa's visit, a cablegram from New York arrived, demanding my presence in America to take care of African students (whose number was now on the increase). It became clear to me that my loyalty was now on trial between three essential and inevitable demands:

1. To go back to my Port Harcourt African headquarters of the A.C.A.E. for me and the other executives to consolidate our victory and expand the functions and finances of the organization inside Nigeria.
2. Accepting the position of first President of the Ibo State Union which I knew must be all consuming, and
3. Complying with the request of New York for me to return to A.C.A.E. office in America for the sake of my scholarship students already in American universities.

While I was contemplating on this, my New York office, sent a second cablegram demanding my immediate presence in the United States. I therefore decided:

1. To hand over the continuation of the work of the A.C.A.E. to A.C.A.E. national executive with my office in Port Harcourt.
2. I felt I would be doing a greater service to the Igbo people, to Nigeria and to Africa by concentrating on making my education mission a huge success than staying back to become first President of Ibo State Union. As a matter of fact, more than ninety percent of students already in America were the Igbos. By denying myself this rare opportunity of being First President of Ibo State Union in order to serve not only the Ibos themselves, but students of all Nigeria and other African countries such as Kenya, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cameroun, Uganda, Tanganyika, I shall have done more good to a good number of youths all over the continent.
3. It was self evident that we the Africans were sole beneficiaries where American people and their colleges were our benefactors. I felt that I must comply with their request without further delay and submerge all my personal interests and needs. It was all

self imposed continental responsibility. I however planned to return to Nigeria in two months time for the sake of A.C.A.E. in Nigeria and the Ibo State Union organization. My plan to go to America and return soon was known in appropriate quarters before I departed.

The story in the next chapter will show that it took me two years and two months of breathless moments to re-establish the A.C.A.E., bought student's hostel and office and obtained more scholarships which ran from 150 to 431. It was during this time of my delay from two months to two years, that I was informed that as a result of my absence, they were considering Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe to be their President. When I got this message, I was very happy they did this, because originally I had my hidden reservations on that aspect.

Chapter Twenty-Three

THE IRON SACRIFICE

No easy hopes or lies
Shall bring us to our goal,
But iron sacrifice
Of body, will and soul,
There is but one task for all –
One life for each to give.
Who stands if freedom fall? ....

– Rudyard Kippling.

It was now four months since our first group of students arrived at Lincoln University. Another group that followed had also arrived. Some immigration difficulties arose which was beyond the control of the New York board and required my immediate presence.

Besides, the New York Board of Directors of the Council felt that since I had succeeded to send about twenty students to the United States, it was the time for me to be in America. They felt that my A.C.A.E. programme was no more a theory but a reality. The arrival of those African students in the United States was evidence of the materialization of the long-proposed dream. That is why as I stated in the previous chapter, the board in New York sent me a cablegram followed by a letter demanding my presence in New York to re-vitalize the office of the council and take care of student matters.

I was totally unprepared to travel this time because the A.C.A.E. itself needed more consolidation in Nigeria, but I had to do it. I therefore made impromptu arrangements.

I hurriedly left Port Harcourt to Nnewi to tell my family that I was again scheduled for the U.S.A. Nobody understood me. I had

only 24 hours to get ready and go away. My departure was painful to me. I somewhat questioned myself: "What is all this rush-on-life for? What am I after? Where will these many years of self-denial lead me to? Is everybody around me aware of the personal sacrifices and great risks entailed?" Here I was, from 1937–1947 after Zik told me that Africa needed me, I allowed myself to be dribbled around Nigeria begging for money to go to America to get education. Comparatively, none of the other seven argonauts was exposed to this kind of beggarliness before they left for America. I originally planned to go with Disu in 1937, I failed because of family intervention and demand. I tried to go with the seven argonauts, I was disappointed for the same reason (although without my knowing it). At last I travelled in loneliness with £10 in my pocket from my country. Again 1940 to 1947 the idea of freedom for Africa and education of its youth put me in perpetual bondage of want and struggle which made me impose upon myself a personally disastrous undertaking to plan education for a continent without money and without the support of the government of my own country. God had brought me to Africa in 1945 and in two years of lonely battle against colonial government in Nigeria, I won. And now just to settle to consolidate the victory so painstakingly won, America wanted me back to take care of African students. And that I must do completely altruistically, forgetting self, forgetting family and personal security. I shelved all that questioning aspect of my mind and looked sky-high for a purpose, for a goal which I had set for myself.

Coming down to my Port Harcourt office, I finalized all arrangements for the departure of some more students who were scheduled to leave the country by boat before my own departure. Coming to Lagos, I was faced with cold reception by the European Exchange Officer Mr. Williams from whom I wanted some dollars for my use as the president of the Council. I went there several times, and the permit was not granted. Mr. Williams put me off several times, and finally told me to come in the morning of the date of my departure by plane and that they could grant me some dollar exchange. The plane was to leave by about 10 a.m. for Accra. At 7.30 a.m. I was in Mr. Williams office. By 8.00 a.m. I met

him. He said that we must see another senior officer. We went to his senior officer Mr. White who seemed kindly disposed and told me they could grant me a small amount of dollars. Before I opened my mouth to thank him, Mr. Williams interceded and insisted that there was no need for the grant of the permit at all. His European brother nodded at his argument and said to me quite reluctantly: "Well, Orizu, I am sorry we cannot help you."

I had only about an hour and half to catch my plane at Ikeja Airport twelve miles away. I had not yet got a visa for my passport from the U.S. Consulate. Ordinarily it was required that an immigrant visitor must have some evidence of financial support before obtaining a visa. The Exchange Control Officer Mr. Williams knew that, but how he and his co-worker expected me to proceed to the United States on behalf of Nigerian citizens without any grant of transfer of some money in my own behalf, puzzled me. There was little time to think or talk.

I simply rushed to the U.S. Consulate Office and explained my plight and requested that I be granted a visa, on my own recognition. Fortunately, I got my visa. Before the end of all these transactions it was 9.30 a.m. I took a breathless speed to the airport and left for the U.S.A. once more.

By 2.00 a.m. next morning, our plane landed in New York. I had to revive my office from the scratch. I took up 105 Nassau Street near the famous Wall Street, New York City. At this time, more students continued to come and there was a great need to purchase an African students centre for an office and to house the students coming from Africa. This included other African students who found it difficult to fund their education in other colleges. I revived New York Centre. A member of the Brooklyn chapter of the A.C.A.E. Mrs Mary Kinsey offered her house. I made down-payment and bought the house – 172 Mac Donough Street, Brooklyn.

My first duty was to meet the Board members. I had several meetings with the Board members where my decision to purchase a house was approved, but there were no funds in America for this purchase. The funds came from whatever membership and other fees collected in Nigeria to purchase and up-keep this students' hostel



Flanked by ACAE students in New York .... Standing from L to R: Enyinnaya Nnochiri, Bathram Orji, Oyibo Akwuba, Ifekwunigwe Aroh, Ndukwe Egbuonu, Udokwu, Beatrieze Patricia, U. Okoye, M.C.K. Ajuluchukwu. Sitting from L to R: Ndukwe Obi, Odeluga, Ogueri, Uduaro Okeke, Ada Obi.

and council's office. I must note here that Mrs. Constance Cummings-John, a Sierra Leonian and a one time Mayor of Freetown, then in New York City played a decisive role in getting Mr. and Mrs. James and Mary Kinsey in purchase of their property at 172 Mac Donough Street. Mary Kinsey was a leading member of the Brooklyn chapter of the A.C.A.E. The purchase of this Africa House – students' hostel made the job of the A.C.A.E. a lot easier and encouraged the incoming students from Africa.

There was however, one very serious hitch. All state owned higher institutions in New York State did not admit non residents into their schools, much more about granting scholarship. I discovered this when I visited Brooklyn College and met the Dean of the college – Dean Bilderse. She said she knew about my programme and had read my writings but could not admit the African students because of the law of the state of New York. She said, "I am sure that the Governor of New York will listen to you if you appeal to him about African students. If he admits African students through your organization, I myself shall benefit thereby because I am a Jew and my people will for the first time gain admission, then you will have made history to be the first person to open the gateway for foreigners and non residents to state owned universities and colleges in New York State." Shortly after, I arranged and dashed away to Albany to meet the Governor on appointment. I was very fortunate to have been received with all warmth and friendliness. After about thirty minutes of discussion, the Governor's office phoned education department to authorize African students under A.C.A.E. to be admitted into any of the state owned colleges and universities.

That was in my own opinion, one of the most important international victories I won for Africa. Not only did the Governor lift the ban but also gave me forty scholarships to New York State owned universities for technical students[1]. I had told him the plight of African students in education – our lack of technical knowledge etc. Perhaps because of its historical importance it is necessary for

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1 The complete detailed history of the ACAE, its achievement is to be published in published in another volume.

me to mention that the African students who broke this ice were M. C. K. Ajuluchukwu who according to them, was the first African admitted to a state owned college in New York. He was admitted by Dean Bilderse in Brooklyn University, Udeonitsha Okoye was admitted to New York City College for Engineering, and a score of the others who followed were Eze Ogueri, Ekemezie Amaku, and others.

I entrusted the care of these African students in New York in the hands of some benevolent ladies who were members of the A.C.A.E. in America. Apart from Mrs. Constance Cummings-John whom I had earlier mentioned, others were Miss Mary Harden (Mrs. Mary Umolu), the Secretary of the Brooklyn Chapter of the A.C.A.E., Miss Verdia Jones, Mrs. Mary Kinsey, Mrs. Alexander etc. They were fondly called mothers by all the students. I visited Bethune Cookman College in Daytona Beach Florida, on my tour of other colleges in other States where African students were admitted; while there, I received a phone call from my office in Brooklyn saying that they received a cablegram from Nnewi that a baby girl was born to me. This news was broken to the whole A.C.A.E. students in the college. They were: Uduaro Okeke from Abatete, Babs Fafunwa from Lagos, Eze Ogueri from Obibi, Chukwuemeka Ebo from Onitsha, Ako Antigha from Calabar, Ikem Ojji from Nnewi, Uzo Moneke from Zakirai etc.

Surprisingly, these A.C.A.E. scholarship students decided that they would name the baby by themselves, Uduora Okeke suggested that as a result of the light of education which I had brought to African youths and in which mission I was engaged at the time, he would name the baby Akwukwoka. Chukwuemeka Ebo said that Akwukwo means book in Ibo, that more inclusive word would be Nmuta which means knowledge and education and therefore her name should be Nmutaka. Then Babs Fafunwa protested that I was not just an Ibo man. I was a Nigerian, therefore my first child shall be given a Nigerian name. He named her in Yoruba – Ayodeji – Double joy. Joy in the fact that I had begotten them as my children in education and joy in the fact that God had given me my own child.

I was so happy with the sentiments of Babs Fafunwa and the whole students.

It was an irony not only that I was not there with my family when my first child came to the world, but even to name her I had no opportunity.

As the number of students increased and the problem of financing them was getting out of hand, the British government in Nigeria precipitated an enquiry making several unfounded accusations:

(1) That I used A.C.A.E. students' money to purchase a house for myself, because they believed that A.C.A.E. house in New York was bought for my own use.
(2) That some of the boys were left in America without admission into the colleges as I claimed.
(3) That the money paid by the students which was sufficient to train them in the universities was not used to finance them but that I turned it to my own personal use.

As a result of all these, Colonial Office in London and State Department in Washington instituted an investigation carried out by Sir Ivor Cummings from Colonial Office in London and Dr. Ruth Sloan from State Department in Washington.

It was interesting to note that Carnegie Foundation as I learnt was persuaded to donate six thousand dollars for the travel expenses of Mr. Ivor Cummings and Dr. Ruth Sloan just to investigate the activities of the A.C.A.E. in terms of the accusations. These two officers travelled to all the universities where the A.C.A.E. students were located without any previous information to me that they were going to investigate my own students.

At the end of their investigation, Sir Ivor Cummings and Dr. Ruth Sloan paid a surprise visit to my A.C.A.E. Headquarters at 172 MacDonough Street. They introduced themselves as representatives of Colonial Office in London and State Department in Washington who were assigned to look into my A.C.A.E. students' affairs and some complaints about their difficulties in the country.

By their coming to 172 MacDonough where the students themselves resided I was happy that they could see the nature of

my struggle and personal sacrifice by looking around and going through my own records which I showed to them without reserve. I could see in their faces a sense of sympathy veiled with the face of officialdom. They knew at once without being told that that building was not my personal property. There was nothing flamboyant about the hostel. And in their investigation, I was too sure that they did not meet a single A.C.A.E. student anywhere in America who was not studying in a university. They could also see that more and more students were trooping in from Africa. Rather, they told me that for every four African students studying in America, three were my own scholarship students. They expressed apprehension that the number of African students I got into the country was too many for the scope of A.C.A.E. financial resources and suggested that I should temporise in increasing the number of students in order to make my burden less heavy. The question of my using A.C.A.E. funds for any purpose other than the promotion of A.C.A.E. affairs, they discovered was unfounded.

While I appreciated the views of these prominent officials from two powerful governments, I told them that I had a different view on this question of African Education in America of that date.

Africa is a continent, but facts known to me at that time were that there was not any single country in other continents which had not each hundred times more students than the A.C.A.E. whose students had not exceeded one hundred then. I was not operating bad or inefficient administration. Lack of funds is not inefficiency I argued strongly. They did not argue this. All my students were academically qualified and were well behaved in the country. The universities with whom I had arranged for the admission of the students were fulfilling their promises admirably. Even the students themselves were doing enough work/study within their ability. The only real problem was that the contribution from Africa either from the members of the council or parents of the students, were simply not enough. African problems had not impressed American foundations enough to help raise fund as students from other continents found it easy to do.

I told Ivor Cummings and Dr. Sloan that the A.C.A.E. did not house only Nigerian students. We had students from Gold Coast, Uganda, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Cameroons. Not a single student among these were sponsored by their own governments. What we enjoyed was the sympathy of Roosevelt's administration which believed in promoting cultural relationships with other countries no matter what status.

If I were a white man, at my age and limited resources, with a great dream to educate a continent and gave all I had for its materialization, my book *Without Bitterness* would have earned me a nobel prize and my educational philosophy for Africa would have been scrolled in gold for parliaments and universities to consume. Ivor Cummings smiled with evasive tone of voice and with eyes of deeper understanding and reserve. Dr. Ruth Sloan, a typical American was positive. She said, "Dr. Orizu, something must be done about the plight of some of these students. I agree that by making their number less, it will be easier for you to control. But nobody is against your plan. Be assured of that".

When Ivor Cummings and Ruth Sloan had finished their investigation, the report was not sent to me officially, but I remember they told me during their visit that I over stretched my mission and took up a responsibility that no one individual could control. This was what I was told at the initial stage of this programme. There was not enough funds. The budget of A.C.A.E. was far below its income. That made it difficult for students who were not used to work-study programme of America as I was.

I knew that it was not mismanagement coming out of any bad intention or inefficiency. My plan was deliberate, totally deliberate, to precipitate the issue of African education and expose to light the corrupt influences of deliberate hindrance placed on the youths of Africa to get university education. It was that poverty that I exposed to the civilized world. It was not mismanagement. It irritated colonial powers on one hand and awakened young Africans who were brought to America from their sleep of paternalism to the realities of dignity of labour inherent in work-study programme for which America is famous and from which their citizens were energised and turned into

first class grind of youths whose ingenuity and creativity set pace for the whole world. I was not and never shall be regretful nor apologetic because while this was going on, I was the greatest loser. I had no business exposing myself to undeserved criticisms and attack and character assassination from a mighty empire and their stooges. I appreciated the initial discomfort which some of my students went through which I knew was so temporary because in the end, all came, saw and conquered. They were young men of agility and dependable character with steady nerves of renascent Africans who gave a lie to all predictions that A.C.A.E. had neither schools nor scholarships in America. Each of them one by one was welcomed and admitted in colleges and universities and they proved equal to the challenge of American environment. Thanks to the liberal disposition of American educators and citizens who continued to sing the song of Roosevelt into their ears that the only thing to fear in this world is fear itself. This was exactly the way I put my case to Ivor Cummings and Ruth Sloan before they left my office in New York.

Both of them were sympathetically disposed about my appeal when I told them that I shall expect them to tell the Nigerian Government to use tax money paid by my people to help me carry on the scholarship programme. They knew I was turning the public duty of this government into my own personal responsibility. As for me, I could not personally discourage students from coming to America. Students from all countries of Europe and Asia were being supported with funds from their governments in addition to goodwill from the American foundations but my African boys and myself were being criticized for wanting the same education when we had no home government fund nor goodwill from American big foundations because we were black.

This investigation did not stop me from moving on. I planned to open more gateways to Africans in the far West of America before leaving the U.S.A. The West Coast is located about four thousand miles away from New York City. I decided to take a trip to the West Coast by road. In order to do this, I needed a reliable vehicle to call on some universities on my way and solicit for more

scholarships between New York and California. First I decided to buy a new car for the Council to make this trip. The Council had no money so I made down payment and collected a new Ford car. I called on Mr. and Mrs. William Kinsey, the couple that sold Mac Donough Street house to us and intimated them with my planned trip. William Kinsey volunteered to go to the West Coast with me in the noble adventure. He took a month's leave off his job at the railway to accompany me as a co-driver. Mary, his wife, was to join to take care of our feeding when we got there. The secretary, Margurite Martin, made us four.

In that long and tedious transcontinental trip, I alternated driving with William. Part of that journey took us through Arizona and California deserts, the most precarious of all trips I have ever made in my life – to drive a car through the desert. We did not know that before crossing the desert, some ceremonies were performed. However we prayed, then set out to cross the desert with car. We equipped ourselves with food and water because we were warned that there was no stopping any where in the desert for help of any kind and if the vehicle got spoilt there, there would have been great danger because help would be difficult to come by. We drove at the rate of 100 M.P.H. For every hundred miles of driving, William and I exchanged operation. Thus we continued, the red blinding dust impregnated our car, coated our clothes, hair, eyebrows and clogged our nostrils to a point of suffocation. For instance, we stopped at Albuquerque New Mexico, arrived at the University of New Mexico at 1.00 a.m. smothered in dust, exhausted, hungry and worn out. We knew nobody there and nobody knew us, there was no appointment. There was no body to receive us or attend to us at that ungodly hour at the campus so we waited outside the campus in the cold, shivering till dawn. In the morning we had no place to shave or take our bath. We were however directed to the public lavatory around the corner where we washed our hands and faces in preparation to meet the President of the College. We waited almost the whole day. When I met the President, he asked me a lot of questions about Africa, about the scheme I presented to him and why the colonial government was not interested. I took time out to

tell him about the plight of the African youths. The poverty, the deprivation, the inhuman treatments they were subjected to and the urgent need to bring liberation to the suffering lot by giving them opportunity to acquire Horizontal Education from America. At the end of my discussion, the President rewarded my sufferings with offer of two full scholarships for a four year course.

When we got to West Coast proper, I organized carefully programmed visits to several college Presidents and prominent persons, obtaining scholarships from 14 colleges, some tuition, some full and all with opportunities for the students to work on the campuses. With increased number of scholarships from these institutions, a chapter of the A.C.A.E. was opened on the pacific coast of the United States. While in Los Angeles, I was invited to a dinner in the house of Mrs. Bass – the proprietress of the Newspaper "The California Eagle". She was very much interested in the emancipation of African womanhood. She became a member of the advisory board of the A.C.A.E. and offered scholarship for one African girl to study journalism. The recipient was Miss Adaora Ulasi who later became Nigeria's first editress of the Daily Times and now author of many novels. On the information that I was needed in my New York Office, we drove back to New York City.

With this encouragement from the West Coast, I came back to New York City a happy man.

When I came back to New York City, I had to put things in order once more, settle more students that had come from Africa. Having succeeded within these two years of my second missionary journey to properly settle African students in America, (of which Nigeria got a lion's share) in colleges and universities, established a hostel for them, founded the West Coast branch of the A.C.A.E. and simultaneously canvassed for and got more than four hundred and thirty scholarship offers to expand my programme, I planned to leave America.

Whether those A.C.A.E. students had all the money they required from Nigeria or not, they had already caught the joke of the aim of the colonial government in placing restrictions and difficulties in my way and in the way of the Council's programme.

A good many of them were engaged in work/study programme. Some had even after utilizing their A.C.A.E. scholarships, initiated for themselves programmes for their Masters and PhDs. The more enterprising ones among them had even started to send for their relatives in Nigeria to study in America, thereby furthering the aims of this educational mission. I felt I had emerged triumphant from the counter moves by the British colonial government to stop this programme from materialization. In this mood, I left the United States of America in 1949 to return to Nigeria.

SECTION VI

INTO ACTIVE POLITICAL BATTLEFIELD FOR NIGERIAN INDEPENDENCE

This section is the story of Orizu's strict political activities in the process that led to final independence of Nigeria. It is the story of the price he paid for his unusual, relentless, trenchant defence of parliamentary democracy, his exemplary protection of African leadership and unflinching faith and disciplinary disposition which made him the mover unmoved in his philosophy of "no Cross no Crown".

– Editor

Chapter Twenty-Four

CALL TO POLITICAL ACTION

My professional field is Political Science. The unspeakable ignorance in Africa forced me into educational program. To this I gave seven years devotion – my most useful years of existence. The bell for political freedom is ringing in Nigeria. I must leave New York to answer the call. If God of Africa spares my life, let me join in the battle field of freedom, while boys in America are getting ready to continue, where we shall stop.

– Nwafor Orizu.

I must repeat that from the date I arrived in America in 1939 till I returned to my country the second time in 1949, a period of 10 years, I never gave thought to anything concerning myself as a human being. I graduated from the Ohio State University in 1942. Between 1942 and 1945, all my waking hours, were consumed in New York City not just to do my graduate work at Columbia but for the cause of African freedom – dealing with the African Students Association – with its office and headquarters in my own room at the International House; setting up "African Interpreter" a periodical as a mouth piece for the African students in the United States for the first time, with its office in my room; hopping from one university to another in various states of the United States soliciting for scholarship grants to work out a programme both for those who were with me in America and for unknown and unseen youths in Africa; writing a book of revolt (*Without Bitterness*) against imperialism and presentation of African international personality to the world; turning myself into a journalist speaking for Africa in my column "Africa Speaks;" giving

a corporate existence for the first time in history to an international organization, the A.C.A.E., originated by an African indigene to link the African continent and the United States of America in the field of education and cultural relation; staggering from one institution group, club, college, radio house to another debating and presenting the case for African identity while the Second World War was raging on; struggling to make two ends meet for me to feed and pay my rent, without funds from the government of my country, my people nor from any recognized American philanthropic organization and thus feeding on a bowl of oatmeal or cornflakes with half a quart of milk every morning and going hungry from day to day which made me visit father Divine restaurant for a leg or breast of a chicken almost free from time to time.

When these were over it was a monumental era in my life. I was living a life of fulfilment for I was told in 1937 that Africa needed me. Spiritually possessed with over brimming sense of altruism, I left America in November, 1945 dashing back to Africa which I left in 1939 with all the abandonment of a vagabond. I jumped into Nigeria that was under ferment of strike and its aftermath; I jumped into the dungeon of imperialistic conspiracy. Behind me in my home was a ruined palace, in front of me in Nnewi, my father substitute Chief J. C. Ulasi was dead. The orphan which I was when I left Nigeria in 1939 greeted me once more when I returned to Nigeria in 1945. I spoke to Nigeria on Horizontal Education and African Irredentism and my mission started with turbulence and violence on one hand and acceptance and popularity on the other.

In a most novel fashion, I set up my missionary journey around Nigeria – North, South, East and West. I visited the homes of Sultans, Obas, Emirs, Obis, Amanyanabos; to clubs, organizations, rural groups and schools. I went to preach my gospel of educating the uneducated and re-educating the miseducated in order to release the soul of Nigeria from the miasma called perpendicular education and to set the spirit of the youths on a West ward movement for Horizontal Education in the United States of America. Like all pioneers, I was tossed from one end of criticism to another end of acrimonious blackmail. But like all faithful men, I refused to yield to the pressure.

I remembered a poem I scribbled the day I visited Calabar while I was travelling between Calabar and Oron. It reads as follows:

THE VIRTUES OF FAITH

Nothing is more powerful than faith
To understand God and perform great deeds
Is to follow the path of faithfulness
Faith is the stabilizer of confidence
It channels the routes of heroes
It breaks the rocks on the paths of pioneers
It shortens the journey of million years to seconds
It levels down mountain Himalayas into desert plains
It turns helpless refugees into opulent landlords

II

Own a faithful mind and be a little God
Adore the virtues of faith and join miraculous prophets
Nigeria will soon be free if saved from wrong education
Spill your blood for a nation like heroes and saints of old
Pass your days and nights to free a people from slavery
The road to freedom is open for youths of Nigeria to march
Fear not enemies of freedom, their days already numbered
The man in Africa is ready to join the rest of the world
To sing the song of faith that freedom has come to stay.

I keep on saying that the job that required a whole government to perform was done in a twinkle of an eye by an empty-handed vagabond of a student. On February 10, 1947, ten Nigeria youths started the West ward movement for American education on an organized large scale. As they left the shores of Nigeria, I followed them back to the United States in my characteristic vagabondage without even being permitted to take $1 exchange from the government of my country to take care of myself or even to pay for taxi from an American airport to the city.

Besides, I did not care enough for my mother and my family whom I again left behind unceremoniously for the service of other

peoples' children as if I was employed and paid by any group of persons or the parents of the students for this purpose. Honestly, I did not know the kind of spirit that was carrying me around the world during this period. Had I but purchased a house in 1944 when I had enough money from my book *Without Bitterness*, I would have been going back to America this second time to find a place to stay on my arrival. In 1939 when I came to the United States, I went straight into a university. This time, I was travelling to New York not knowing where to stay or which house to enter. I had always asked myself what people thought I was doing for my country or what those students I was serving thought was happening to me. I swallowed these insipid tastes of cogitation in absolute abandonment of myself and my future for the greater good of my mother Africa. I hate ignorance, I hate slavery, I hate racial bluff. To do anything that will eradicate these items that I hated was more important to me than my life, honour and existence. In America, the organization I started as a student was institutionalized by establishing African Education Centre for students in New York City, at 172 Mac Donough Street, Brooklyn New York. I travelled by land through Arizona and California deserts to far off West from New York Atlantic to American Pacific coast. I broke New York State rigid law which banned non-New Yorkers from obtaining scholarship to New York State colleges for the first time. And from 150 scholarships with which I returned in 1945, I returned to Nigeria in 1949 with 431 scholarships, which was totally unknown to my fellow country men, but well known to the British intelligence who were secretly frightened.

As I arrived in Nigeria in 1949, I asked myself who among Africans in recorded history had gone this far to torment and forget self, to ignore and suppress opportunities for personal growth; forget personal wealth and protection as I had done in these most useful years of my life? In whose office did I seek job in America and didn't get it? I was asked to be an instructor in the university with a fat salary, I rejected it. Millionaires lured me into business as a pre-condition to showing interest in my educational programme, I suspended them all. *Without Bitterness* gave me enough money to

start life, I used it all for my scholarship programme. I turned my face to Heaven. Then beheld the African continent in the firmament and I said, "Oh! mother Africa, through your prophet you told me that you needed me. Give me protection against discouragements. I am going back to Africa personally empty-handed to join in the battle field of political freedom which I must continue to fight for without looking for reward. I have scattered thy children now in American universities, God feed them all with the spirit of adventure whereby all their stumbling blocks will become their stepping stones." With this prayer in New York, I turned East ward to the black man's continent.

With this background, I landed in Nigeria in September, 1949. The mood of the A.C.A.E. in Port Harcourt was that of victory over the British Raj, victory over doubting Thomases who maintained that Orizu would never send boys to America; victory for young Nigerians whose thirst for education was quenched by the efforts of so few among so many oppositions. I heard many revealing news. I was told that they wanted to make me the Mayor of Port Harcourt.

Bishop Johnson, the owner of Enitona High School and Enitona Printing Press summoned me to his house, blessed me, and asked me to bend down for him to pray to God for my vision. After praying, he said to me: "My son, I have planned to hand over to you, the Enitona High School and the Enitona Printing Press to enable you improve on your educational programme among the youths because I consider you the rightful person to inherit what to me, are my greatest contributions to Port Harcourt and Nigeria. I have faith in you, I trust you, and I hope that God will help you." When he offered this, he asked me to give him only five hundred pounds as a token payment for the school and the press. I borrowed a sum of £500 from Mr. Williams (a Sieraleonian in Onitsha) through Peter Aroh of Abatete. I was simply flabbergasted, solemnly humbled, as I watched the personality of Bishop Johnson as if a God was addressing me. It was through this inspiration that the newspaper, West African Examiner, was originated which maiden issue appeared on November 21, 1949.

A similar experience came up, this time from a European. Mr. Lombard was a Frenchman and a manager in the S.C.O.A. in Port

Harcourt. He telephoned my office and sought an appointment with me. On his arrival, he expressed a great deal of admiration for my effort to educate my fellow Nigerians. His language was not that of politically stand-offish European merchants in Africa. He was affable and appeared to like the politics of independence. May be he had inbibed the spirit of the famous French Revolution. I don't know. But he came out with a surprising offer in the way of advice by saying "Dr., we think that you ought to establish some business in Port Harcourt for yourself. This will enable you work more freely and effectively for this your self sacrificing national service for your country." I listened very attentively when he continued, "I want you to come and purchase a very fine luxury bus (Panhard bus), first of its kind in Eastern part of this country. I have been authorised to offer this to you for immediate purchase." Then I asked; "how much does the bus cost?" "The price does not matter", he said. "But I have no money", I submitted quickly. "Oh, we know that Dr, that's why I'm here to let you know that you can have the bus without paying even deposit. You make it a Township bus here in Port Harcourt and you pay us instalmentally from your proceeds". These two offers from Bishop Johnson and the S.C.O.A. Manager, greeted me as historical surprises. The temptation to own Enitona High School and Enitona Printing Press coupled with being offered a luxury bus without down payment on a hire purchase was irresistible. Not having any business intention at this stage, I had no time to dedicate for effective management of these items even though I had to accept the unsolicited offers. When these two offers were made, I called in some five or six individuals to form Directors of a corporation to manage the bus business. These Directors collected the initial funds with which offices were established and the business took off. I did not contribute much money because I had no money. Only my good will carried me throughout.

At that juncture, Nigeria of 1949 was constitutionally drifting into establishment of representative government. It was now no longer only the educational aspect but preparing the political atmosphere of Nigeria to enable Nigerians themselves be ready and responsible to the exigencies of representative government. Since I had discovered

by experience that any further move with the A.C.A.E. programme without public finance would not be possible, I felt that political freedom will consume my time now rather than working against impossible obstacles. It is only an independent regional or national Nigerian government that could supplement the more than 400 scholarships I had got.

In the meantime; I had become the proprietor of the Newspaper "The West African Examiner" in Port Harcourt inspired by Bishop Johnson of Enitona Printing Press. This Newspaper was established in November, 1949. I was the Managing Director and M. C. K. Ajuluchukwu was the Editor.. My column in the Newspaper was Orizontal Current. On the front page of the maiden issue of this newspaper was "Orizontal Verdict" adapted from my book *Without Bitterness* which reads:

> "Imperialism is anti-Christ. It has no spirit, no morality. It does not respect other people's rights. It is a gospel of hate which seeks its own. It speaks with the tongues of angels and acts like a devil. It is easily provoked; it is envious; it is proud; it does not intend to bear anything. It rejoices in its iniquity and celebrates a triumph that causes other thousands disaster."

An event occurred that forced me to the open field of political action. It was the shooting of 21 miners in Enugu. I was not in Nigeria during the general strike of 1945 though I played a truly nationalistic role about this from far away America, by presenting and defending the case of Nigerian workers and Azikiwe before the American and British Governments quite apart from disseminating the news in my Newspaper column in "Africa Speaks"[1]. Now, the sad news of shooting the 21 miners excited my political combativeness and human interest. I did not only condemn it in my West African Examiner, but drove straight to Enugu to comfort the miners. Incidentally, the government had demanded that the workers go back to work. The workers refused to resume work unless an enquiry was instituted into the massacre of their colleagues and that they must be fully

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1 A. A. Nwafor Orizu, Africa Speaks, (1990) p. 82.

represented. As a result, at the time of my arrival in Enugu from Port Harcourt, there was a stalemate between the government of Pykenot, the Commissioner and the coal miners. When I arrived Enugu, Louis Mbanefo and C. C. Mojekwu visited me at Peter Aro's house at the coal camp and pleaded that I should advise the workers to comply with the government demand for them to go back to work. At that juncture, no step had been taken by any individual or groups in the country to resolve the stalemate. They said that the Commissioner Pykenot would send a car to pick me to see him before I met the workers as I planned. I went to see Pykenot. Pykenot was an affable gentleman with a deep diplomatic undertone, with all friendly finesse to convince me about the good intention of the government if only they could go back to work without further delay. I wanted to know from him the details about the shooting incident. He was rather disinclined to give details and politely requested that I see Captain Johnson the Secretary to the government, who was lying down in the hospital bed slightly indisposed. I was driven to the hospital in the government vehicle. Unlike Pykenot, Mr Johnson looked rather impatient with the workers' refusal to return to work and said that he would expect me to explain to the workers that it would be to their advantage to go back to work and if they did not, they might invite more shooting of life out of them. I got up abruptly and asked the government vehicle to take me straight to the Udi Siding where hundreds of miners thronged awaiting for me. I was boiling inside of me, for the apparent test of black man's courage which Johnson aroused in me. Could it be that this gentleman thought that I was such a coward that the prospect of death would make me accede to his request or make the workers forfeit their rights? Neither Pykenot, Johnson, Mbanefo, Mojekwu nor Aroh knew how much I was provoked. When I arrived at Udi Siding, armed policemen and soldiers were around, surrounding both the workers and the rostrum from where I was to stand and address the workers. Peter Aroh, Mbanefo and Mojekwu were also standing by, apparently believing that I was going to comply with their request. I remember seeing a policeman, Chief Angus Ilonze of Abagana. When I got up on the rostrum, I made a categorical statement that what I was

going to say to them, was my own and my own alone and that I would be personally and completely responsible for what I might say. Then I turned to the workers and said, "My brothers and fellow Nigerians, I mourn with you that the blood of our heroic brothers was spilt on the soil of our fatherland. I sympathise with your resolution not to go back to work when the government has not considered either your right to exist or your sorrow for your dead comrades. I was very highly provoked when I learnt from the Secretary to the government that there are some people who have not learnt that not all Africans are afraid of death in pursuit of freedom. I was told that if you do not go back to work, you would be shot again. I am therefore agreeing with you that none of you will go back to work until a board of enquiry is set up in which your representative and Nigerian patriots will be a part". There ensued an outburst of clapping of hands, shouting, throwing up of caps by the workers. I jumped down from the rostrum and drove out of Enugu straight to Onitsha. I stopped at Benjamin street, the residence of Hon. P. E. Chukwurah, the proprietor of Africa College and the Chairman of the A.C.A.E., Onitsha Branch. I had my lunch there. As I left Benjamin Street I immediately crossed Court Road into the street called "Half Way to the Bush," leading to Upper Old Market Road. I was stopped by two armed soldiers and a white Commissioner of Police with a revolver in his hands pointing at me. I told my driver to stop at once. He asked my driver where he was going, but the driver kept silence. Then I told him I was going to Port Harcourt. When this occurred, I remembered that Chukwurah told me that riot was going on in Onitsha township destroying European firms etc. In the mean time, the Commissioner of police told my driver to go on. They followed me to Port Harcourt. As soon as we arrived my premises at No. 12 Creek Road, one of them beckoned and said to me, "You are under arrest, you will stay in your house under police guard until further notice."

All these happened before the team of National Rebirth arrived in Enugu. As a matter of fact, before the National Rebirth team formed and acted, I was already under house arrest in Port Harcourt. The British Colonial resident in Port Harcourt was Mr. Chubb. He

was rather friendly and used to call me on the phone. He suggested that I could come out once or twice a day. I politely refused the offer. I felt that I needed not escape the responsibility of being punished for the sake of the blood of innocent Nigerians. I was however released from my house arrest after 21 days.

Before 1951, there were colonial nominated members in Enugu on an advisory capacity to the Regional Commissioner Pykenot. At this time I received a letter of invitation from Pykenot through Mr. G. L. Guise the district officer in Onitsha to a special and important conference with all the traditional rulers in Nnewi district at Nnewi Court premises. I travelled from Port Harcourt to Nnewi for this meeting. On arrival at Eme Court premises, Mr. Guise was already sitting at the table at the conference hall, alone, with one empty chair near his own. He welcomed me most respectfully to his table and asked me to take seat near him. Shortly after, the Chiefs started gathering around the conference hall but were made to stand around the dwarf wall of the hall not to come in. Among those who were there were the Obis of Nnewi, Ukpor, Ozubulu, Oraifite, Ihiala, Ichi, Amichi, Ekwulu, Unubi, Azuigbo, Osumenyi, Ezinifite, Ebenato, Ihembosi, Okija, Azia, Lilu, Mbawsi etc. While he addressed the traditional rulers, I was seriously embarrassed and surprised that no arrangement was made for these traditional rulers to sit down inside the hall in respect of their status.

I commented on this and Mr. Guise apologised, but noted he was in lack of seats. He told them that the object of the meeting was to deliver a message from Pykenot the Eastern Regional Commissioner about one of their sons Dr. Nwafor Orizu. Dr. Orizu's position in Nigeria", he said, "is comparable to that of Nehru in India". The Chiefs clapped hands in jubilation. I was indeed surprised. Then Mr. Guise continued by saying that the government of Eastern Region considered Dr. Orizu appropriate for the membership of the then nominated Eastern Regional House of Assembly in Enugu. All the Chiefs clapped their hands in a prolonged applause. I remained silent and calm but let loose a reluctant smile to conceal my feelings of uneasiness about this sudden offer and acknowledgement from a government we the nationalists had decided to remove from Nigeria.

Honestly, several newspapers and friends in the United States of America in acknowledging my activities and the publication of *Without Bitterness*, had mentioned that I would play the role of Nehru in my own country. But when it came from a British colonial in official capacity, I felt that since they jailed Nehru many times before my arrival in Africa, they must be preparing my place in prison since they believed that I was a Nehru in Nigeria. Much as the prospect of being punished occurred to my mind, my admiration for Nehru's intellectual and political standards made me feel highly flattered and inspired. I spoke briefly in response to Mr. Guise' statement and thanked him and the regional government for their very kind gesture and consideration. I did not remember any member among those traditional rulers who knew any thing about Nehru or India at that time so that I simply soliloquised about the analogy he made, but asked him to inform the government that I shall reply to their invitation. I saw that this made the whole chiefs very happy and seriously grateful to the government and Mr. Guise. If I had rejected that nomination before these traditional rulers, I was sure to be misunderstood. Few days after, I published my rejection in the newspaper (the Spokesman).

I understood that the Commissioner was very displeased and disappointed with my reaction to their offer. During this period, the agitation for self government had become an accepted reality in Nigeria. As the pressure mounted, the programme for regional self government was promulgated. The members were elected through electoral college. In Onitsha province, there were 500 members of the electoral college, to elect three members for Onitsha. The contestants were such big wigs like Chief P. E. Chukwurah of Abatete, proprietor of Africa College, Dr. Walter Onubogu of Ogidi, a known medical practitioner, Chief P. N. Okeke of Alor, business tycoon of Bright Street fame, Chief E. I. Oli of Oba, school proprietor, Chief P. N. Anaekwe of Ukpor – president non Onitsha Igbos, Barrister Ibeziako of Onitsha – a wealthy legal practitioner in Onitsha, Barrister Mbanefo of Onitsha – first Igbo lawyer and a successful legal practitioner in Onitsha. Originally, the people of Port Harcourt had put me up for election from Port Harcourt, but the

representatives of Onitsha Province led by Nnewi delegates had approached me to persuade me to come and represent Onitsha Province. Having come back from the United States and was organizing the A.C.A.E., I had neither a car nor means to do my campaign. Bicycle and hired vehicles were my means of transportation with the result that even on the election day, I was two hours late in arrival. During the election I was told I scored 361 out of the 500 electoral votes to become the first member for Onitsha Province. L. Mbanefo and E. I. Oli were second and third respectively. It will be noted that this first election to the House was not party sponsored. N.C.N.C. did not sponsor any of us. We ran as independent candidates. Party sponsored election was yet undeveloped.

During this period, the position of the chiefs of Eastern Region appeared to me to be chaotic as compared with the position of their counterparts in other regions.

I therefore felt that something must be done for Eastern chiefs to have a collective bargaining power for the formation of the prospective House of Chiefs when Eastern House of Assembly shall have been established. This was the genesis of the Eastern Chiefs Conference – (the first of its kind), which was inaugurated in Nnewi. It was the members of this conference that initiated the circumstances that led to the formation of the Eastern House of Chiefs. It will be noted that Chief Onukogu who later became the chairman of this Eastern Chiefs Conference was appointed a regional minister. I understand that he was the first Chief in the Eastern Region to be so honoured.

The final address I made to the Hon. Chiefs of the Eastern Region is instructive.[2]

Formation of a Party Government

Coming to Enugu, it became evident that every member was an independent candidate. The issue of a political party forming a government was a novelty. My first duty then was immediate

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2 For my address to the inaugural session of the Eastern Chief's Conference, see Appendix 2.

campaign to turn all independent members into N.C.N.C. party. This was a personal obligation to lay a solid foundation for the party and its initial cabinet. At this stage, Zik was in Lagos, so was Ojike. K. O. Mbadiwe was also based in Lagos and only paid visits to the East. The entire Eastern Region comprised various ethnic groups including the Camerounians. No doubt the Ibos were in the majority. I found it much easier to galvanize the Ibos into the N.C.N.C. but fortunately majority of the non Ibos in the region were naturally anti colonial in disposition without any particular party affiliation. Some of them were front line nationalists. For example Eyo Ita, an Efik, was superlatively imbued with the spirit of nationalism. So were S. T. Muna, Okoi Arikpo and others from other areas. I had difficulty in getting Dr. Udo Udoma and Louis Mbanefo who were my personal friends to join the N.C.N.C.

Not all the Ibo members followed as instantly and without persuasion. But the champions of the original foundation were Eyo Ita, E. O. Eyo, John Nwodo, Edward Nnaji, and K. O. Mbadiwe. When we met at Owerri Hall during the preliminary stages, we made several political decisions for structural organization for sharing and allocating responsibilities for political take-off. One of the things that agitated our minds was whether representation was going to be on provincial or divisional basis. Mbadiwe was in favour of provincial representation. I submitted that things ought to be done on divisional basis. When this was put to vote, my proposal was accepted for the party. As a result, Onitsha Division was first to be organized and inaugurated by me before any other division in the Eastern region. The N.C.N.C. under the leadership of Dr. Azikiwe being a liberal and democratic party, carefully selected a non Ibo as the first leader of the government, in order to appease the minority. In any case Dr. Azikiwe who was President of the party was in Lagos and not a member of the House. Expecting me to be in the cabinet, the portfolio of Minister of Local Government which was allocated to Onitsha Province was reserved for me. When I declined being in Eyo Ita's cabinet as I opted to go to the centre as a member of the House of Representative, I requested E. I. Oli to take my place as

Minister of Local Government as the third member for Onitsha, and informed the party accordingly.

The duty of being in two legislative Houses simultaneously was most onerous. It demanded all the time and energy to fight against a formidable empire with all their experiences in manipulations and suppression of all the voices of freedom. Quite a good deal of the members of both Houses were men of agility and nationalistic fervor. But not too many of them were quite adept in the principles and procedures of parliamentary democracy. But there were a few bright stars whose constancy, independence and articulation gingered the Houses of Representatives and Assembly respectively into a formidable avalanche that constantly threatened the pull of imperialistic obscurantism until they were buried beneath the earth. Such Hon. members as E. O. Eyo, John Nwodo, Edward Nnaji, S. T. Muna, K. O. Mbadiwe, Mr. M. T. Mbu, Mallam Isa Kaita, Ibrahim Waziri, Mr. M. E. Ogon, Mr. F. Oputa-Otutu, Dr. I. Olorun-Nimbe, Obafemi Awolowo, T. A. Odutola, S. O. Awokoya, S. A. George, Chief Gauise Obaseki, Ademola II, S. O. Ighodaro, A. O. Ogedemgbe, R. O. Iwuagwu, I. U. Imeh, B. C. Okwu, J. A. Nzirim, D. S. Adegbenro, F. A. Awosika, J. A. Wachukwu, A. Nwachukwu, Sir Adesoji Aderemi, Alhaji Aliyu Makaman Bida, Mallam Inua Wada, Ja'afaru Emir of Zaria and Ahmadu Bello.

The members of opposition in the Eastern House of Assembly were really ineffective although they were highly respectable personalities such as Hon. Louis Mbanefo, Alvan Ikoku, Chief Ezeliora, Dr. Udo Udoma, Dr. Akanu Ibiam. As I saw at that time, these opposition members were not essentially anti independence or unpatriotic. I believed that they were just anti-Zik for one reason or the other. I personally was quite friendly with all of them before this time. Dr. Udo Udoma I remember once spent a three day holiday with me in my father's palace in Nnewi. Two of us enjoyed ourselves in my mother's house. Chief Ezeliora of Ezinifite was my distant cousin based on our monarchial origin from Ihiala royal house. Louis Mbanefo was a personal friend of my family. I did not stop enjoying my lunch in his house whenever I visited Onitsha. Alvan Ikoku told me point blank that he considered me a good friend. I admired Dr.

Akanu Ibiam as a venerable man of deep religion. I say this to show that in my own opinion there was no serious ideological opposition between us of the N.C.N.C. party and the opposition. Their opposition to N.C.N.C. members in the House did not indicate that they were in favour of the prolongation of colonial rule. Whether the white men they were dealing with knew this at that time or not, I do not know.

I was the Chief Whip of the Eastern House of Assembly and the liaison between the cabinet and the party. I was also nominated a member of the Oil Palm Produce Marketing Board, Eastern region. I attended this board meeting only once. Before the next meeting, a friend came to me with an offer of £700.00 as a bribe from an applicant who wanted me to help him obtain licence for palm produce marketing from the marketing board. I rejected the offer. When I discovered that members indulged in such exercise, I simply resigned from that board. My first preoccupation was to watch the nature of the budget to come from Governor Pleas and N.C.N.C. government of Eyo Ita. When the budget was in draft form, I checked to see what was done for the promotion of education.

It will be remembered that the members of the A.C.A.E. and I agreed to suspend the utilization of the over four hundred unused scholarships I obtained during my second trip to the United States, but to fight for immediate establishment of representative government which would be more responsive to funding of higher education for our youths with particular reference to university education abroad. There were no universities in Nigeria at the time, excepting the University College, Ibadan founded in 1948. Naturally, I made a proposal for £250,000.00 (two hundred and fifty thousand pounds) to be provided per annum for 250 scholarships for the students of Eastern region studying in the universities. I submitted this proposal to the N.C.N.C. Assembly caucus in which Eyo Ita, the leader of government and his ministers were present. This was agreed on there and then.

The only secret in this matter was that no one among my colleagues knew my inner philosophy on the matter of our quest for independence. They did not know that I did not come to the



As a Legislator in Enugu 1952.

party to be a minister or leader of our government or party at that time as I knew I was qualified. My major interest was to make education a primary objective and greatest priority among other things, in our budgetary policy. And in this case, the regional Assembly to allocate immediate fund for overseas education was my personal preoccupation. Even before this Assembly was established, in Enugu of which Camerounians were also members, a Camerounian, Foncho Lima, had already gone to the U.S.A. with my scholarship. Zik and Eyo Ita were prophets of education and mental emancipation. With them I would have no difficulty, were there not N.C.N.C. cabinet controlled by the British Governor?

When therefore I found out that Governor Pleas cabinet did not give any consideration in the budgetary allocation to higher education so urgently needed as a prelude for realistic approach to independence, I knew I could not work within the frame work of that government. If Zik did not go to America at the time he did, where could we have found the theory of a new Africa? If Nkrumah did not go to the United States of America for education at the time he did, could Ghana have been the first country in West Africa to get independence from British Empire? I could not see a fruitful Nigerian independence without infrastructural arrangement based on educated leaders, engineers, agriculturists, architects, political scientists, economists, technologists, journalists etc. to lay the foundation of who would become pioneers and founders of that independence. Indeed the sum of £250,000 I proposed seemed to me infinitesimally negligible to the importance of the meaning of education in a new society looking forward to independence in the twentieth century.

The origin of my political disagreement with government of Governor Pleas would be traced to this absolute neglect of education and other fundamental amenities which I thought and believed we were obliged to foster with urgency.

My speech during the budget session is a loud testimony to my indictment of a budget based on colonial philosophy but presented by the representatives of apostles of independence. The text of the speech follows hereunder:

MY SPEECH DURING FIRST BUDGET SESSION OF THE FIRST REGIONAL PARLIAMENT OF EASTERN REGION OF NIGERIA DATED FEBRUARY 20, 1952

Your Honour,

I am rather pleased that it is my opportunity to be a participant in the deliberation of the first sessional parliament of this nation at this moment of political upheavals. And before I go into the problems of the budget, let me praise the constitutional spirit of the Anglo-Saxon race. Compared with other powerful white races, I am of the opinion that the Anglo-Saxon both in Europe and America, have proven that constitutionalism has superior appeal over the fascist and nazist tendencies. It is significant to note that in my own first state Nnewi, the British came only in 1905. My father was the first Ruler in Nnewi to see the whiteman. And now we are on the threshold of freedom. India stopped for over three centuries, England was under Rome for more than two centuries. Nigeria's speed is specially commendable, and the record of the East beats all imagination. Never in political history has so few got so fast in so little a time under so powerful an Empire. While therefore I praise the Anglo-Saxon, I glorify the resistant spirit of the people of Nigeria.

I have observed His Honour, himself, and I must congratulate him for his fine qualities and special ability in keeping all elements in check without force during these deliberations. It appears to me that he is characterized with political mellowness and diplomatic naughtiness. His political mellowness enabled him to make us all feel good and humorous while performing difficult and delicate functions of the State. His diplomatic naughtiness forced him into bruising some of us, but those of us who are bruised are pressing on. Our reason for remaining silent while suffering from the bruises is because we want to avoid falling into the hands of the enemy like a wounded bird which while he attempted officiously to tell the people that it was through his wisdom that he and other two birds escaped the hunter's shot, lost the grip of stick on which he was being flown home by his more fortunate but less wise companions.

The National Council of Nigeria and the Camerouns

Time has come, your honour, when we must abandon fear of enunciating the philosophy we advocate – NCNC is a political organization with a social philosophy. We are of that NCNC and we are proud of it. We have sold the idea of this philosophy to our lost brothers, and the fathers of this NCNC have accepted our lost brothers as prodigal sons whom we give more wine and more drinks on the day of their return from their prodigality, while we appear to have overlooked the faithful sons who might blame the fathers for their seeming neglect, to understand that we are happy to have our lost sons put in a state of security so that out of our insecurity, we shall have made them to be secure. To understand the economic philosophy of the NCNC, it is necessary to look into our idea of collective social interest which is our social philosophy.

"By our interest philosophy is meant a collective conviction of a people which anathemizes the social evils of their times, while clinging unfalteringly to a definite programme which conforms to our moral principles and ethical norms as those in turn, relate to our material and spiritual yearnings. Ours is a group decision not to be neutral in matters affecting social destiny. A belief that the voice of the people is the will of God; a resignation to a course, a will to die in the defence of a choice. It means a definition of means and end, and a determination to attain a particular goal by a particular means."[3]

We are led to gird on our harness for a social combat which will destroy all evils existing in the present order of things. This philosophy is so strongly rooted in us and our faith so strengthened in it that we the participants in the movement always picture our coming session as a battle in which our course is certain to triumph.

In the exact words of Kweku Gardiner of the University College, Ibadan: "We believe that attempts to convert individuals to the African point of view, to seek redress for particular wrongs and grievances, and to plead for favours are futile. We can never build

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3 A. A. Nwafor Orizu, "Without Bitterness" (New York: Creative Age Press, 1944) p. 303.

a strong and self-respecting community on the basis of ... other people's generosity and charity. We are from this moment ... determined to play an active part in the dynamic process which are shaping our destiny. To do this, we must, from now on strive to think in terms of principles and interest. In the historic days ahead of us, he who fails to put national interest above all others is a traitor. We are out to conquer time. We have no faith in any nebulous conception of civilization, Western or otherwise. We need to cultivate within us the spirit that can live through destruction of plans, disappointments and failures. This spirit also can lead us forward in spite of all."

If these be our ideals, your Honour, it appears to me that this present estimates which we have decided to approve unconditionally, does not and cannot reflect the ideologies of the NCNC.

It Is Political Expediency And Not Philosophical Acceptance which has forced our hands to this temporary approval. Imagine Your Honour, that our idea of money is to use it for definite social ends based on the assumption of co-ordinating the human energies necessary for the realisation of a collective happy State. In doing so we want every man to be responsible. No class – whether they be kings, whether they be nobles, whether they be intelligentsia, whether they be workers or whether they be women or children – will be permitted to impose their particular interest at the expense of the others. We mean to develop an economic state which will attract all groups because all will be benefitted thereby. These estimates, Your Honour, do not reflect this philosophy. These estimates seem to us to be like a strong fighter who covered his hands with white velvet gloves stretching his hands of welcome to the other man on the other side as though it were an extension of hand to shake his friend with the velvet gloves, the first underneath the glove blew him down, before he got up to fight back, the man with the velvet gloves had disappeared.

One idea of egalitarian distribution of benefits and allocation of duties was reflected in our divisional representation in the centre. I advocated this idea during the early stage of our party activities here.

Take Onitsha Market and £500,000 (five hundred thousand pounds). Now while a representative of Onitsha Division, I ought to be very grateful for this proposed loan. I must say, for the purposes of philosophical record, that if I were representing Onitsha on that Board, I would have allowed a loan of about one hundred and fifty to one hundred and seventy five thousand pounds for Onitsha Market, and gear myself up to the development of other areas in Onitsha Province. Nsukka and Udi need a lot of development, Awgu needs more than that. Awka needs a whole lot, Ozubulu needs a secondary school, no road in Ukpor, Aguleri needs tarred roads and schools, Anam needs transportation and post office. I have also heard that Camerounians have no roads on which to trek. What we need in Nigeria today is the means of getting somewhere and the means of knowing something and the means of hearing everything. A beautiful market is a means of getting comfortable in one place, and Nigeria needs no comfortable cushions at a time when her sons and daughters are blind and crippled. It is only after we see and after we walk that I shall endorse that such a lump sum be loaned to one undeserved projected like that for the present.

Local Industries

Your Honour, it will be an abuse of intelligence to discuss local industries as though it has had any serious consideration in the government plan of the old region. For that matter there is nothing to discuss. There was no local industry except some natural local industries which were here from time immemorial, our industry is still the industry of the raw materials, and the British regime planned to leave us in that state so long as it was possible to do so.

Now that the dynamic NCNC is in power we must decide to develop local industries on definite foundation, otherwise our declaration will be mere sentimental effusion without any substance. If we stand by our economic program, we will have to develop a new industrial society, if we fail to do so, we shall witness capitalistic doctrines and inevitably allow and encourage individual initiative for industrial revolution in Nigeria. In that case, the only difference between the old society and our own will be in our effort to protect

the citizens of Nigeria from the whims of the foreign investors and combines, and encouraging the former to borrow and invest profitably. But I have my eyes set on a new industrial society beginning with local industries into huge expansion in all aspects of our national life.

Police

I am not impressed with those honourable friends who wish that the money for Police Department be cut. No Sir! Rather, I would suggest that more money be allocated to that Department to send some of our police to other countries for better training in criminology and civic responsibilities. Our police, like those of the civilised world should be trained to appreciate the scientific basis of crimes and have a balanced psychological insight into the problem of man in a continually changing social order. Man is a psychological and also a sociological case. To keep him at peace, the basis of his psychology and sociology must be understood. Our police know none of these. They are like a carpenter without tools or like a cook without salt.

The fault with the police lies on the problem of the expatriates. We need to have intelligent Nigerian citizens to be highest officials and eliminate the number of non-Nigerians who drain the huge sums appropriated for the police. I wonder whether some of us had visited the Barracks in Eastern Nigeria, and seen that they are like white-painted sepulchres. They glitter from the outside, whereas the poor constables live in small rooms under suffocation and ordeal; today nothing is to be said of the shame that hurt their pride when they have visitors who will find out that each constable has only one small room where he and his wife use it together; all cooking utensils packed there, all house apparatus and wardrobes set out there, shoes and hats and grammaphones etc. jumbled together like in a mad house. These young men so very poorly housed will be expected to do first-class job which requires first-class health that is not provided for.

We need to have only Nigerians to be superintendents of police. No need delaying their progress by going through senior Assistant

Superintendents. I suggest that Nigerians who are fit for senior Assistant Superintendents of police should become Superintendents at once and, no doubt, their salary will not cost Nigeria any expatriation load.

Send police on scholarship to Scotland Yard, Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. Reduce the number of expatriate officers. Promote Nigerian citizens and Nigerianize the police force, and there will be less financial burden in that department. By that we shall get better services from the police. By then, they will know more about the functions of the police in a world which is faced with crime wave, traffic flood, religious abandonment and traditional dislocations.

Civil Service and Order-In-Council

We cannot speak intelligently on this financial bill or any other until there be an indirect control of all finance by our party in Eastern Nigeria.

Civil servants are servants of the Crown according to British practice. Legally, this is definite. Yet the Crown has annually to seek from Parliament the money to pay the civil servant.

The treasury in practice, has to approve departmental estimates and submit them or agree to their submission, to the House of Commons. It was owing to this that in 1919, the Treasury set up an Establishment's Department within its fold with the functions of organization or department, personnel superannuation and so on.

May I ask then whether it was a mere accident that the Prime Minister is the first Lord of the Treasury? No Sir! it is not an accident. The Prime Minister is the first Lord of Treasury because he is the overall centre of the majority of the citizens who collect the money that the civil servants consume.

Employment of personnel is in the first instance, a financial question. The money come from people, and the people have the sole right of approving how their money should be spent.

In a party system of government, the problem of patronage comes in. And patronage we all agree, is therefore a question of the political leader of the party in power.

I want to drive this point home, that beginning with 1855, Order-in-Council were issued regulating the admission to civil service in England. As time went on they were being issued to cover more grounds such as conditions of labour. In 1910, these Orders were consolidated. These had been amended by other later Orders. But since conditions of service are matters of finance, such amending Orders are necessarily issued at the request of the Treasury, headed by the leader of the party in power.

Treasury (or party leader) control of the civil service condition is by no means limited. It is the party leader under Treasury who acts on behalf of the Crown and is in complete control of the civil service. To make this point clearer, read: Royal Commission of Civil Service (1929) Minutes of Evidence Appendix 1 pp 23-27.

I therefore say that the financial control of the civil service in Nigeria should be in the hands of the party leader despite the Order-In-Council. It is a part of the unfinished businesses of the British democracy in Nigeria.

Position of Ministers

George Schuyler of New York once reminded me of one adage: "That it is always a relatively easy thing to get a man out of slavery, but it takes more time to take slavery out of a man".

Same Is True of The Minister

Our Ministers must understand that this new constitution is a result of the shouting of the "noisy men", the efforts of men of silence, the fruits of the labours of our women in their riots, the outcome of revolting spirit of our workers and the common man. The British attachment to constitutional method and the Nigerian spirit of attachment to realities have made it possible for us to be here without blood shed.

We want this right so far obtained to be used without fear. Majority rule, under representative government is acceptable without question. You, as Ministers must always use your majority power derived from us, knowing that behind you are formidable mixtures of citizens. Some are acceptable to me; others are not acceptable

to me. And these categories of men – acceptable and unacceptable, have their salutary meanings in the history of any oppressed people in their struggle for freedom. I advocate the principles of legitimate "Compromise on certain issues".

Natural Rulers

The first law of democracy is that we lose what we do not share. Some men who consider themselves liberal sometimes lose sight of what a true democracy is.

In the field of political science, we understand democracy to be a principle of living. It is not a particular culture. Democracy is a movement, it is not a monument. And that is why it adapts itself to particular cultures and does not destroy them. For example, in political democracy, there are essential basic principles which make any country politically democratic, cultural differences not-withstanding. For illustration, political democracy may be said to include among other things, the franchise of all adult citizens; freedom of thought, press and speech; the election by the voters of those principal officers of the state who formulate policies; the understanding that any citizen or party defeated at the polls will retreat unobtrusively from the office, while those duly elected will take charge and conduct the government while also defending the rights of the minority. Any country with this arrangement may be considered politically democratic.

My idea of our Natural Rulers is that a definite attention should be paid to make a definite plan for the Natural Rulers of the East. Thanks to the astute and clever minds of the NCNC party leaders who have agreed on this my suggestion. We cannot walk backwards in this age. But certainly we can walk forward with every limb of our social structure. But as we go along, nature will make it so that all vestigial limbs will fall off from the body structure in their own good time without destroying anything.

I submit that the idea of traditional rulers is not against democratic concepts or socialistic government. America and England are democracies, but how different their practices. One is under presidential system, the other under monarchal – cabinet system,

On the question of our traditional rulers, I shall choose to take the position which Abraham Lincoln took during the time of the Civil War and the Negro Slave Issue. He said in effect that his greatest interest was the Union of America. If by emancipating the Negroes the Union will be affected, he would do it. If by enslaving them the Union is attained, he would do it.

I believe that to succeed we must of necessity make the whole society be willing to participate in our great struggle to get away from the British imperialism. I submit that if we, at this stage, discriminate against certain sections of the Eastern society, there will soon be a stalemate or a draw back. Speed is essential, and weight is a factor in velocity.

Can we do without our Natural Rulers? I say "yes," but not now. Our society at present is so interwoven in the ties of family, so interested in group action based on customary procedure, that in as much as some of us, the "educated" want to ignore the presence and influence of our postulates, I have facts to prove that the political influence of our Natural Rulers in the East is still of paramount effect in moulding public opinion in places other than townships. And how many townships do we have in the East?

Any intelligent social engineer knows that no society will remain the same, and no custom will remain unchanged. Economic and philosophical tendencies bring new ideas. Then life of Nigeria will flow as do all streams along the meandering lines which will result from the interactions between its own biological impulses and rocking facts of circumstances. To get away from the prison gate of whiteman's domination in Nigeria, the leaders of the NCNC must learn the lesson of hastening slowly in certain political issues which have great implications in the life-blood of a people.

Now my honourable friends, the most important question before us is the unity of all divisions in the East and unity of all regions in the nation. Eastern Region cannot be effective in the centre unless we are truly representing all the elements of the East and unless we are sure of the support of all levels of persons who voted the NCNC into power. If by recognizing the problems of the Natural Rulers in the East and associating ourselves intelligently with such

problems we shall have won the hearts of all men for the sake of unity, I shall support such a move; if by rejection and denouncing unceremoniously the honourable position of the Natural Rulers as known in our ancient and recent regimes (though not always recognized by the British authorities), we shall attain the unity of the East, I shall support the move.

But I am not inclined to believe that any unity will be attained by denouncing any kind of claim or recognition of the people who represent, even at present, the basis of our social order, all British upside down and contemptuous attitude towards the political culture of the East, notwithstanding. I am not among those who would hasten to recommend the House of Chiefs, for the East, nor do I want to condemn without investigation, those who want the House of Chiefs. Any man with scientific detachment who does not permit some social prejudices to colour his judgement should suspend conclusions and try to investigate and understand what our Natural Rulers are saying. It is entirely in our hands to advise them, reject or accept any of their proposals with respect and honour. To offend our Rulers in the East at this time is to invite a new internal enmity which may be used by our other enemies against the NCNC in Nigeria. We must hasten slowly in a country where the element of reaction and intrigue abide everywhere awaiting for opportunities to disunite and destroy.

A superficial thinker may misunderstand my stand in this matter particularly after knowing my expressed social and political philosophy. But my stand is unchanged expect that I would not stand to see NCNC lose what it does not share at a time when unity is becoming difficult in Nigeria as a whole. A word is enough for the wise.

Education

Your Honour, looking at the Estimates in this department you will agree with me that:

(1) Our money is intended to be the privilege of the *Beauracracy* and the Clerical.

(2) The Education Department policy reflected the philosophy which sanctions that education must remain the privilege of a special class; those who have the money and those who know the officers in power whether by virtue of their race or by their nature of slave diplomacy.
(3) The Education Department retains a positive prejudice against African pioneers in education
(4) The Education Department neglects technical education upon which modern society is based for economic prosperity.
(5) The School curricula endorsed by the Education Department reflects a dangerous tendency to train men and women who, by their limited and narrow experience, will be invariably some good civil servants ready to obey the command of the master on the top, without the scientific mind for creative and productive activities.

These inadequacies and anomalies call for some national questions which must be solved.

(1) What must be the relation of the Church and the State in the Eastern Region in matters of education of the young?
(2) Will education be a privilege or a moral obligation?
(3) Will education make technology and scientific research possible or will it be education to produce clerks and lawyers and doctors?
(4) Who will direct and influence our education?
(5) How long shall we beg foreign universities to help us in our higher studies?

To these question I answer:

(1) Church and State had struggled for centuries over the education of the citizens. We are familiar with all arguments involved. I simply want to state that our citizens have it as a right to be educated by the State. The State has always had better facilities to give more adequate education without much cost to an average citizen. To me the Church should remain a moral citadel for those who come into its fold, while the State takes

up dutifully the function of educating the people in public schools. If there be any private schools owned by the Church, let them not be discouraged, but the State should not be called upon for any grants-in-aid. That should be the function of such Church members.

(2) Education is not and should not be a privilege. In a democracy, it is a moral obligation to be intelligent. It is a moral obligation not only for a person to be intelligent, but for an intelligent person to be informed as to the effect of his conduct. In order to demand the sense of duty from our citizens, we must train them to know their duties. Public welfare may be imperilled much more by ignorance and carelessness than by wilful aggression. Prejudice, habit, propaganda, pressure of public opinion are the major obstacles to thinking. Right thinking gives birth to right action. Under imperialism, we need all citizens to be so educated in order to stop being victims of these obstacles to thinking. No nation can grow beyond the thinking of its thinking many.

(3) I endorse such education as will encourage technology and science along with other phases of education to make an individual a whole person who can contribute and create rather than distribute and absorb.

(4) The quality of our *teacher* and *directors* and *inspectors* need a drastic overhaul. A director or a teacher of African education must be excellent both as a technician and a personality. He must be loyal to African culture and understand African character and mentality. He must reflect his convictions in Africanisms for which he must be prepared to fight. He must be an inspirer and reviver of our legitimate loyalties. His mind must be trained to approach problems with scientific detachment and with creative impulse, otherwise, a new generation of free men will never grow in the New East of Nigeria. The Director of education and his subordinates to whom our emoluments go must be capable of defining the intellectual bases of African culture as precisely and distinctly as possible. A child growing into manhood must be made to understand the basics of his

faith in life. It must be clear to him as contrasted with the other ways of living, or else he will become a mere slave to a foreign dogma which he does not understand nor will be able to transmit to others if left alone.

(5) We must start plans to own our universities and stop wasting tremendous sum of money for transportation and feeding in other countries where standard of living is apparently higher than here.

Children in Nigeria have the right to know that their Minister of Education and his Directors take education as an avenue through which all citizens get a full knowledge of the universe and immediate physical environment. In our school curricula, time has come when Nigerian children should know about comparative studies of cultures, world history in their inter-relationships. Special emphasis should be laid on African history as a prerequisite to the study of other histories. The interpretative history of European imperialism and totalitarianism and their systematic decay in a free world should form an essential part of our school curricula. They will soon learn that good has supremacy over evil and that though lie – a big lie may have a good start, but that ultimate triumph awaits the hands of truth, the smallest truth. Our school curricula should emphasize polytechnical education as developed in Russia. Socialism of contemporary society should be brought to notice. More should be known about Democracy, Communism, Fascism, Socialism, Nihilism, Anarchism, Tripledenism, Satyagrahism – and some Africanisms both sub-limited and emerged ones. Most of our present educational officers do not understand us!

Suggestions

(1) Let there be a new Education Board and new Education Code.
(2) Let us endorse the 250 scholarship scheme for the Easterners this year.
(3) Recognize the certificate of students who are trained from African owned schools.

(4) Give grants-in-aid to all schools whether missionary or private, or leave all of them alone while the State takes over.
(5) Reopen T.K. Utchay's schools, Aba and Port Harcourt and grant him funds.

In conclusion, I must emphasize again that the economics of the Education Department substantiates my fear that this budget is not ours. It conforms with the philosophy of the privileged class. *The bureaucracy first*, then *the clerical*. (One million, one hundred and seventy four thousand, eight hundred pounds) we have £1,174,800 for education (eleven thousand pounds) £11,000 goes to the bureaucracy, that is the officials through their emoluments. The other great portion of one million goes to voluntary agencies, who are predominantly the foreign religious bodies in the country.

The whole prejudice and class distinction of English society has reflected in educational scheme of Nigeria and this must go.

Public Relations Office

We are representatives of the public. It is our duty to reflect without fear what is called public opinion. True, Your Honour, the Public Relations Office here may be of some use in the past. But the people of the East, including every thinking member of this honourable House, disagree with continuance of the office of public relations. The people feel and we are convinced that this office is not needed any longer in view of the fact that the new regime is to some extent in the hands of the people's representatives, and in view of the fact that the officers of this Department through the weekly journal ("the Outlook") express the opinion of the old regime as a matter of habit and official obligation, money allocated to this kind of endeavour is considered wasted.

What we need for the present is an information office which should be recognized with co-operation of the NCNC party in power with a view to educating the public about the activities of the new Government in power. It is also necessary to develop within it a system of keeping the public constantly informed on statistics of facts of all that goes on in the East. Such information should be objective

and without diplomatic sword to cut deep into the psychology of the lethargic populace.

Expatriates

The logic of paying an imported employee not only more money per capita than the employed citizens of the soil, but also adding a heavy sum to his pay called expatriation allowance, is one of the signs that Nigeria is still an Empire-slave nation. No free nation which is faced with economic crisis as Nigeria, could afford to drain its resources in order to satisfy imported workers in its fold. That is not so in America. It cannot happen in England. The financial problem of the East is partly a direct result of the evils of expatriation allowance.

The problem of the NCNC Government of the East must be to do some thing about expatriation allowance as from April, 1953. We cannot do that now without some basic changes.

Local Government

(1) The Minister of Local Government simply has to realize that Government is a service instrumentality. The greatest problem in the East is that local units of Government are not responsive to the public good in a satisfactory measure.

(2) The institution of A.D.O.s and Residents perverts all principles of political science in modern government. The tendency everywhere is to separate the functions of the offices of the State; to employ experts where needed, and engage statesmen where they are fitted. That an ADO (sometimes without prerequisite education) should be a judge in native courts, a legislator, and an executive, is a challenge to pure commonsense and freedom. When in one man you find a merger of political powers, he is bound to feel autocratic not only by choice but by mere pressure and in desire to expedite, he cannot be thorough. He cannot be specifically responsible.

(3) Another endemic political disease in the East is the system whereby District Officers and Residents are made to stay only

a few months in each station and run away either on leave or on transfer. This results in:

(a) Lack of sense of stability
(b) Lack of consistent policy
(c) Lack of possibility of discovering the real ability of an officer
(d) Lack of sense of responsibility
(e) A confusion of affairs in the minds of the governed.

(4) Another serious problem is the idea of Intelligence Report. I stand deploring the purely scientific inaccuracy of those reports in view of unsatisfactory conditions and circumstances under which they were made. I challenge the accuracy of such reports transmitted by corrupt interpreters whose danger to the welfare of our government cannot be overstated. It will not be long when the office of interpreters will be abolished in the East. Either that officers will be all Nigerians or that foreign officers must learn and speak the language of the area they are to work in.

(5) In the East, we have no true statistics of our population and this must be done in the age of scientific planning and modern government.

Chapter Twenty-Five

THE CRISIS

The arrow of sense of commitment must leave the bow of executive pride or the cord of people's patience too far stretched, will break the door of crisis into the government chamber.

– Nwafor Orizu.

I was never in the good books of the colonial government in Nigeria from the very first time I started my activities in America. This was aggravated from 26th November, 1945 when I gave my first public lecture in Nigeria titled "Horizontal Education and African Irredentism" at the Glover Memorial Hall, Lagos, quite apart from introducing "dangerous Zikist philosophy" which gave birth to revolutionary Zikist Movement. Nothing had happened between 1945 and 1953 to change the colonial attitude against me, and nothing had also happened to abate my resoluteness towards the path of freedom of the nation.

My budget speech in the House of Assembly made matters worse. It made even wider the gap between the colonial remnants in the Eastern region and Lagos on the one hand and myself on the other. Besides, the speech enabled the colonial masters harness all pent-up grievances of some Nigerians from within and without to join them to plot my crucifixion. In this and my subsequent speeches in the House, I unearthed all diplomatic manoeuvres of the colonial government and their stooges and exposed them. I did not care to imagine the feelings of the imperial powers as a result of my constant confrontations. But I knew for certain, that to Governor Clement

Pleas in the East, and Governor-General, Macpherson in Lagos, my activities were intolerable affronts which must be curbed by irrevocable imperial vengeance.

In the period 1952 to early 1953, I found myself in the centre of a political upheaval in the Eastern House of Assembly in Enugu. All these my ideas were self-assigned. The responsibility of enunciating what were called party policy during the party foundation stage of our political growth in the Eastern House of Assembly, was not assigned to me by anyone because they were not yet ready-made. They were being originated. And I found myself obliged with those others who agreed with me, to initiate and promulgate those ideas. Clearly Zik was in Lagos with the problem of Lagos and Western politics and there was not a single speech I made in the House which I discussed with him before I made it.

I was not personally prepared to contain the failure of the Government to respect the wishes of the majority of the electorate by proposing an expenditure of £500,000.00 (five hundred thousand pounds) out of a budget of £4m (four million pounds) on one market at Onitsha. Nor could I understand the failure of the Government to make provision of a small amount for higher education of the students of Eastern region at home and abroad. I was not satisfied in any way with the service conditions of the Nigerian workers particularly the police. Not much attention was paid to the establishment of local industries. The unrecognized position of Natural Rulers was unacceptable to me. I bared my mind without any reservation on what I thought of these issues and proposed solutions. Then I hit the vexed issue of expatriates, condemned the indirect way our economy was drained by them. I relentlessly insisted on challenging the government on these disagreeable points. I concentrated my whole energy and strategy to obviate these.

I made it clear to pro-colonial Nigerians in and outside the government through my activities that as leader of the majority party in the House, I was not going to tolerate a government against the people. And an overwhelming majority of the people of the East were solidly behind me. For example, on the issue of Onitsha Market, the then European District Officer in Onitsha who was my personal

friend, visited me in my father's palace. He said he came to give me a friendly advise on my position in the issue of Onitsha market bill. He said that the towns in Onitsha province were likely to be against me in this matter. They thought I was depriving the province of the huge amount voted for the market and it was wise for me to stop supporting those opposing the Onitsha market issue. I told him that they could not be against me because I was not opposing the construction of Onitsha market. I felt that the budget of the East was too small to allocate £500,000 (Five hundred thousand pounds) to one market at a time. I was simply saying that other areas of peoples needs in other towns should be given maiden consideration in order that the people will feel the presence of a representative government not just in one place. I suggested that £150,000 (one hundred and fifty thousand pounds) should be allocated to the project as initial instalment with the balance of £350,000 (three hundred and fifty thousand pounds) to be spread over two or three years ahead. I was not therefore quarrelling with Onitsha Market but the idea of not putting other people in other areas into consideration and even neglecting the issue of higher education for our young men and women altogether, in the budget. Then I said to him, "the budget was a hand of Esau with the voice of Jacob. It is the policy of your British brothers presented with the hands of Nigerian stooges".

On investigation, I found that Mr. Hill was wrong in saying that the people misunderstood me. On the contrary, the peoples of Onitsha areas were behind me and each town promised me privately that they would vote no confidence on any of their representatives who will oppose my stand on the issue. The days of the Colonial government in the East were numbered. The final and climactic episode however was the ultimate defeat of Governor Pleas's government and the return of Nnamdi Azikiwe to the Eastern Region.

Meanwhile, election into the Western Region had taken place and the alleged "Carpet Crossing" of Western Nigerian members of the N.C.N.C. to the Action Group had robbed Zik of the premiership of Western Nigeria. After this defeat in the West, Zik came to Enugu for party meeting on these matters. At the meeting, he said he had decided to go to the center. At that time, he was

neither a member of the Eastern House nor was he living in the East. Nobody was therefore thinking of his coming to the East from Lagos. There was a consensus for him to go to Lagos accordingly which was the headquarters of the party, for him to continue to be the party Chairman. This matter was not finally concluded at the close of the meeting. It was after this meeting that I discovered that Zik actually wanted to go to the centre and that a good number of people for fear of being overshadowed or displaced, encouraged him to go to the centre. As a matter of fact, some people even came to me to ask me to join in keeping Zik away from the East. I could not join in such a move which I considered a conspiracy against the leader. Therefore, I decided to do something about it.

Zik had not yet left Enugu. He was at the government rest house and I went straight to him late that afternoon while he was resting. I began to imagine Zik's position after the Western Nigerian experience. Zik was a man whose stature since 1937 had loomed larger than life in the nationalist firmament. His party was the political party of all Nigerians until the carpet crossing episode gave the Action Group a territorial constituency in Western Nigeria. Zik was the most popular black African Nationalist at the time. To suddenly find himself cast out of Western Region was indeed a great ordeal. How could Zik suddenly have no constituency, no forum to lead his attack against the British colonialists? This question continued to agitate my mind that afternoon.

During my discussion with him, I explained to him that if he returned to Lagos, and did not come to the East in preparation to assuming Premiership in Enugu, he would loose his political identity in Nigeria. Zik asked me why. I refused to tell him about what I knew concerning the conspiracy to keep him away from the East because, most of the conspirators were unsuspected close friends of his, but I strongly suggested to and even pleaded with him and stressed that if he did not come back to the East, his political career would be in danger. Between going to the centre to be a member of House of Representatives and coming to the East to become Premier, Zik told me to give him time to think it over. He said he would send me a reply when he got back to Lagos. On this note, we parted.

Not long after, Zik sent me a telegram which read, "I accept your advise". Having convinced Zik, I set out to clear the under-current opposition against him in the party to pave the way for him in the East. I called a very confidential meeting of highly responsible Eastern Nigerian party leaders at Amichi in the premises of Chief Umeagugoesi Ezeoke. I provided lavish entertainment for the invitees. They were about eighty friends in this meeting from practically every important town in the East. In the meeting which lasted from 4.00 p.m. to 2.00 a.m., the next morning we debated the issue of Zik coming down to the East or not and other party matters. Eighty five percent of the people present recommended that Zik should go to Lagos. All through, I avoided to give my opinion. I carefully listened to each and everybody's line of reasoning. In the end, the meeting asked me for my own views as the first member for Onitsha in the Eastern House of Assembly and the convenor of the meeting. Then I told them, "I want Zik to come to the East and rule". Majority of them were angry and disagreed with me. Then I raised a strong and firm voice in defence of my stand. I told them that as far as I was concerned, there could be no alternative to Azikiwe's leadership in the East at that time and I strongly resisted and dismissed the pressure for me to take up the leadership myself. They were kind enough to accept my proposition. All these I did behind closed doors.

Meanwhile, in the House, I continued to demonstrate my belief in parliamentary democracy, avoiding internal schism, sectionalism in politics and above all, abiding by loyalty to leadership.

Two striking incidents of more political significance which took place almost simultaneously were the issues of the sit-tight ministers both regional and central and the vote of no confidence in the Eyo Ita Government. In both incidents which shook the very foundation of the Eastern Regional Government, I played a leading role which is not generally known because I refuse to attach myself to person to person arguments in any intra-party disagreements.

Concerning the vote of no confidence on Ita Government, let me make it clear again that I did not fight Eyo Ita as an individual and I could not have done so. Ita, apart from being a good and

loyal patriot, was my close friend. I fought Governor Pleas's Government. The Government refused to grant two hundred and fifty scholarships to Eastern Nigerian indigenes which the majority party in the house – the N.C.N.C. desired. I was not only the Chief Whip in the House, but the liaison officer between the Assembly and the Cabinet. The very idea of not putting priority on education was in my view at that time more than enough reason to consider the Government of Eyo Ita unfit to represent either the people or the party.

Sometime in 1952, during N.C.N.C. convention, the N.C.N.C. central ministers refused to attend the Jos convention because they did not want to co-operate with the party to make Richard's Constitution unworkable, and the party decided to reshuffle the Cabinet and remove them for their insubordination.

During the Port Harcourt Convention which took place in January, 1953, the party urged for reshufflement of the regional government. Here it was decided that Eyo Ita and his ministers should resign. Ita resisted the suggestion for him to resign and choose any other portfolio he pleased. The nine ministers were prevailed upon to resign and they did resign, submitting their letters of resignation, only for six out of the nine to rush back to Enugu to Governor Pleas to withdraw their resignation. The only three that remained loyal to the party were: S. T. Muna, from Camerouns, B. C. Okwu from Achi and M. I. Okpara from Umuahia. The great crisis had erupted. After this Port Harcourt Convention, the central ministers – Dr. Okoi Arikpo, the Minister of Land Survey and Development, Dr. A. C. Nwapa, the Minister of Commerce and Industries and Dr. Eni Njoku, the Minister of Mines and Power, joined the six regional "sit-tight" ministers to form a new party in the opposition which they called the N.I.P. – National Independence Party. The crisis deepened and the N.C.N.C. leadership and N.I.P. leaders engaged in acrimonious campaign against each other. The bone of contention became:

(1) Is it valid for the regional ministers to resign in Port Harcourt and withdraw their resignation later in Enugu, and refuse to vacate their seats in the Council of Ministers, to which they

were elected under N.C.N.C. party? I believe that parliamentary democracy presupposes the rule of the majority in the Assembly.

(2) Is it right for the N.C.N.C. central ministers to refuse to resign when the party on whose back they rode to power and which they were supposed to be representing, is at logger heads with the government and wish them to resign?

(3) Since the N.C.N.C. regional and central ministers had aligned to form a new party, the N.I.P., had they a right to remain in office of a government originally formed by another party? I believe that it is acceptable to the principles of parliamentary democracy, that despite any written constitutional procedure, the convention of confidence of the majority in a parliament is the sole measure of the justification of the continuation of a cabinet or a member thereof in office. A citizen therefore has no right to continue to hold a public office without the approval and consent of the public. I maintained that since we were practising the principles of parliamentary democracy as theorized and practised in Britain and other democracies, those principles must be theorized and practised in Nigeria. I maintained that one of the main tasks of a people's representative under parliamentary democracy is to forward the interest and support the policies of as many of his constituents as he can. He is to maintain the closest contact with his local party committee which in turn reflects a larger body of local opinion in his constituency. It enables the member understand what the people want and what they will not support. To put this principle into practice, the N.C.N.C. appealed to the public. Each time the N.C.N.C. members of the Assembly were asked to discover the public opinion of their constituency, the result was electric. Each division approved the policy of the N.C.N.C. The N.I.P. leaders had failed to understand and or respect the public opinion of their own constituencies. They therefore had to go.

Meanwhile, at the earliest stage of this crisis in the House, I had an experience I would not like to forget. I remember one evening during the crisis, I returned from Enugu to Nnewi for a day's rest.

As I retired to bed, I heard the sound of a car and horn. There was a knock at the front gate. But I had given instruction to my family not to wake me up for I was too tired. When the gate was opened, it was one of the eminent persons whose name I must not mention. He had a very important post in the Eastern Regional Government and the country. He belonged to one of the parties against whom I was fighting politically. He came without the authority of his own colleagues and in extreme secrecy. He came in company of one gentleman – a wealthy person who had gained my confidence. It became necessary to wake me. My wife came to the door and quietly told me of their presence. I was curious to know what type of message brought them to my house at that time of the night. Even at that time of the night when I came out to see the visitors, they were offered some whisky and soda while I had cold ginger beer. They started the talk. My friend introduced the topic this way. "Well Dr. Orizu, *adaeji uchichi aloanya*,"[1] he looked around as if looking for something. "I think that your life and security are more important these days than all their 'talk talk' at Enugu. You see, this gentleman whom I know is your political opponent, is friendly disposed towards you and has warned me of what is coming to you as a result of this crisis. I don't know exactly what he says will happen, but he believes that there is a great trap set for you should you succeed to be nominated by your party to be a minister and encourage Zik whom the West had rejected, to come to the East. I know that you may not be worried about that, but he agreed to come with me after much persuasion. I want him to talk to you now." Before the other gentleman started to talk, I interrupted, "I am really glad to see two of you but I am definitely surprised that you could come this time of the day. Did you have any car trouble on the road or something?" "Well Dr.", he started, "I know how you may feel about this visit. But the one thing I want to remind you about is that you as a person have a different relationship with me among the whole members of the party leaders. You know how two of us knew each other and how you have been kind to me. I

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1 Ibo proverb meaning: "you don't eye people in darkness".

knew your family long before you were born and I don't want anything to spoil that friendship. Azikiwe is a new person in the East. He and Ojike simply came with their commercial politics to overthrow the East. I don't believe that Zik and Ojike could do more than you and others will be able to do. You all put us in power and Zik and Ojike think that you are a fool to have put N.C.N.C. on a more co-ordinated basis. Now things are being broken and you are about to be made the scape goat of it all, and it pains me that you don't seem to realize what was coming. Perhaps you may not believe me, but very soon you will get into trouble as a result of this your determination to break this House of Assembly. You will not only lose your seat in the House but something bad may come. And as an old observer of Zik, I doubt if he will not find reason to leave you in the hands of your enemies to perish alone." I interrupted, "Please I am sorry I don't mean to interrupt you, but be specific in what you are saying. Do you mean that Zik will put me in trouble or what?" "No" he said, "Zik will not put you in trouble himself, but trouble will come and I bet that Zik knows about it and he may not run to your rescue nor will the party for which you are now fighting blindly while digging your own grave." I felt that perhaps this man came merely to persuade me to halt the break down of the House of Assembly. I had wanted to dismiss them without concern, but on second thought, I said: "I am really grateful for this piece of advice and I shall like for you to continue because I want to know what I must do in the circumstance you have described. First I like to know the nature of what would happen to me, second, I want to know the remedy". The man said, "thank you, now I must tell you what I understand. I heard that as soon as your party breaks the House of Assembly, with you as their ring leader, something will crop up particularly if you are nominated into ministerial post which will make you and Zik to be in the East at the same time." He continued, "I want you to know about this. And I shall let Mr. ... say something." The other friend took up the discussion in parable, "*adaeti anyaichi laaa*"[2] and he said, "Dr.

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2 Ibo proverb meaning: "the eyes of a tattooed face is not opened too wide".

you are a clever politician, no need beating about the bush. We come to ask you to stop your people, your party men from breaking the House of Assembly. Save this man here and nothing will happen to you. No need giving your life for these confusionists from Lagos. They will disappoint you if you let them come to the East." At this point, I was sitting uneasy and I was anxious to speak. Then I spoke; "I have heard all that is said here. I now know what it is all about and I must think it over and telephone you when I come to Enugu on Monday. After a short period of silence, I said, I must add that no one person makes up my party. All we ask for is acceptance of parliamentary democracy in Nigeria. I shall be the last man to fight against other parties if they accept the principles of democracy. I have not committed any crime in Nigeria but I don't want to be deaf to your advice. What I am saying is that what ever happens, I shall not retreat from the battle but we shall see on Monday."

Since I did not budge in carrying out the aggressive policies needed to break up an unjust government, my friends did not talk to me again, nor did I make a telephone call as I promised.

During this critical moment, Zik happened to be in Enugu when the House was in session. He attended as an observer from the public gallery. As soon as he entered the Assembly house while the House was in session, the entire House shouted Z-i-i-k, Z-i-i-k. This disrupted the proceeding of the House, to the embarrassment of Governor Pleas, the presiding officer. He then warned that if this out-burst was repeated next time, he would order the gallery cleared. After the session, I went to Zik and asked him what he thought about Governor Pleas's warning. We agreed that N.C.N.C. party members should not shout when Zik comes into the House next time. They were advised to remain calm. But then it appeared that those on the opposing side advised their members to make noise when Zik would enter the gallery again to enable the Governor accomplish his intention of humiliating Zik just to show that he had no constituency.

On the next day then, when Zik appeared in the gallery, the N.C.N.C. and its supporters kept calm while the opposing side started shouting Z-i-i-k, Z-i-i-k thumping on the desks. The Governor

ordered the soldiers and police men around to clear the gallery. Immediately the order was given, the police and soldiers marched towards the gallery and so Zik stood up with his usual gentlemanliness and humility, and slowly walked out of the gallery. As I watched Zik walking out slowly, I saw Nigeria humiliated by a foreign overlord. I could not contain this. The blood inside of me was boiling in rage and revolt. I saw my own leader literally pushed out from the House we built while the party men looked helpless. The whole House remained quiet. The faces of Nationalists were all gloomy. I said to myself: "How can a man die better than to face fearful odds for a nation to which God assigned him", as a Roman soldier said. I stood up. I forgot all the finesse of diplomacy and demeanour of an Assembly House, and uttered, "Mr. Clement Pleas, you are nonsense! Mr. Clement Pleas, you are nonsense! Today, you will know that you have humiliated a man whose party has majority in this House. This House, can hold no more until you rise and go to your chambers now and invite Zik and apologise to him for your inclemency." As I was finishing this statement, all the N.C.N.C. party members started to rise and walk out. I sat down to watch the end of the drama. Clement Pleas unceremoniously stood up from his elevated seat, went to his chambers and apologised to Zik. Then the House resumed its sitting.

This was the last straw that broke the camel's back. The colonial government did not take this affront lying down. The die was finally cast. I was soon informed by an agent that the Governor had sent a message, SOS to Macpherson in Lagos that if I was not removed from the House of Assembly and imprisoned by all means, he could not serve any more as an effective Governor. It was now a question of time. It was learnt that as soon as Governor Pleas sent this SOS message to Macpherson, Inspector Oduko who was on another investigation at Ibadan was called back abruptly and assigned to prepare warrant for my arrest.

The next day, unknown persons believed to be government agents removed my brief case from my seat in the House while we were on recess. It was containing several documents including some copies of my prepared speeches in the House, my motor and driving

licences, two books and some cash money. The police was lukewarm to investigate and discover the culprit. I also want to remember that during this period, Zik came to Enugu for a meeting. He sent Kolawole Balogun to me to inform me that the party intended to make me the leader of Government in place of Eyo Ita.

Before this message came to me, one of my colleagues had approached me, soliciting my support and also requesting that I see Zik on his behalf to make him the leader in place of Eyo Ita. I had no taste for leadership or cabinet post where a colonial master presided. Zik scheduled to stay in Enugu for party meeting for four days during this visit. As soon as Kola related Zik's message to me, I left Enugu for Nnewi without seeing Zik.

I came back to Enugu four days afterwards when I thought that the meeting must have been over. This in my opinion must have helped those who wanted the post to have the chance to approach Zik. I gave some flimsy reasons for my absence. The fact was that the issue of who becomes leader of Government business was not settled in those four days. It was postponed. Zik summoned another meeting at Aba. This meeting was held at the original house of Barrister Montacute Thompson of Sierra Leone on 100 foot road Aba, which he sold to Green Mbadiwe.

In this meeting were Zik, Ojike, Mbadiwe, myself, etc. After the meeting opened, Zik suddenly asked me a very unusual question, "Prince, how old are you"? I hesitated to answer. Zik turned to Mbadiwe and asked him his age. In a split of a second, I remembered the joke of what happened in Enugu, Zik's message through Balogun, Mbadiwe's approach to me and my deliberate absence from Enugu meeting. Before Mbadiwe replied Zik on his age, I caught in. I said to Zik, "Oh sir, I now know why you asked me about my age. If it is a question of who will be the leader of Government business, please sir, count me out. Let Mbadiwe take that position now." Zik immediately turned to Mbadiwe. Mbadiwe readily accepted the position. Then Zik asked Mbadiwe, "what portfolio will you take? Since Eyo Ita was in Agriculture, will you take Agriculture?" He said no, he wanted Local Government. Then Zik turned to me and said: "Well Prince, you want to take Agriculture

or what?" Then I asked Zik a question: "Sir, in a civilized country, a person of my talent, is he asked what portfolio he would take or is a portfolio assigned to him?" He answered, "he is asked what portfolio he would want." Then I paused and told Mbadiwe to come with me for a chat.

Two of us as good friends went into the bathroom in Green's house and I asked Mbadiwe, "why did you choose Local Government, did you do government? Why didn't you choose commerce? You don't seem to appreciate the fact that I deliberately conceded leader of government business to you. If you have any doubt about it, I shall ask Zik now to leave both of us to contest the post on the floor of the House and see who wins." Mbadiwe said: "oh no, *Dianyi obughu aga'hu*. There is no quarrel. I shall choose another portfolio." We both came out and joined the rest. Mbadiwe told Zik he had changed his mind. That he will not take Local Government portfolio. Then the Local Government Portfolio was assigned to me while Mbadiwe was billed to take leader of Government business after Eyo Ita.

I therefore undertook and drafted the Vote of No Confidence on the sit-tight ministers by the N.C.N.C. members of the Eastern House of Assembly dated January 20, 1953 in which Mbadiwe was proposed as leader of government business. Most members were at first reluctant to sign the papers because they were afraid of the colonial government. I was the first signatory to the document. then a relatively junior member of the party, Dr. M. I. Okpara came forward after a while to sign, then others followed. There were fifty six signatories in all[3]. I also drafted another resignation letter for the sit-tight ministers and handed it over myself to each of them to sign one by one and give back to me during a meeting of the party in Enugu. Because of previous Port Harcourt experience, while the meeting was still in session, the signed resignation letters were sent to the Governor while the sit-tight ministers were still in the meeting. They could not go back to withdraw. With these episodes, the sit-tight

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3 See the original draft of vote of no confidence and the fifty-six signatories in Apendix 3.



Zik (centre) and self (right) with other NCNC leaders during a compaign tour of Calabar after the 1953 crisis.

ministers and their allies outside the Assembly considered me the greatest enemy to them and the government even more than Zik himself. The debate in the House is available in the Hansard but an article published in the *West African Pilot* of February 4, 1953, gives a graphic description of the event of that period, captioned, "N.C.N.C. WINS DECISIVE VICTORY OVER REBELS AND IMPERIALISTS. EASTERN GOVERNMENT LICKED BY 60-13. ENUGU, February 4". There was an unprecedented crowd of people in this town dancing, singing and indulging in the greatest merry making, festivity since the result of the voting was announced here a little after mid-day. The officials and private members abstained from voting. The figure of 60 was much more than the $^{2}/_{3}$ majority required to make it imperative for the regional ministers to resign. Therefore it is now obvious that the ministers must resign their portfolios to the Lieutenant Governor, Eastern Region.

ORIZU SPEAKS

When the debate continued this morning, Dr. The Hon. A. A. Nwafor Orizu was the principal speaker. That is after Mr. Jaja Wachukwu had ended his much-booed speech.

Orizu lashed at Ita's government for being a government against the people. He cited a catalogue of bunglings which had been made by the ministers since they assumed office as part of the Eastern Government.

Ayes Had It

After a most exhaustive debate, closure was moved and adopted. When the question was put, the President of the House announced, "The Ayes have it, in favour of 60 votes to 13. The N.C.N.C. has won."

To me, this was one decisive victory in my political career. By the 30th of January, 1953, the motion for the removal of the sit-tight ministers having been passed, new ministers were appointed. I was made the Minister of Local Government. After one of my hot speeches in the House during this crisis, the House recessed

and as the members stepped out for recess, I was arrested at the top step of the House of Assembly and was immediately after, bailed. After this incident, I continued to attend the House. *West African Pilot* February 4, carried the story thus: "ORIZU DECLINES, ENUGU February 4 – Dr. The Hon. A. A. Nwafor Orizu, M.A. LLD has told the Eastern Parliamentary party and the NEC that he could not accept the offer of Minister of Local Government for the Eastern Region. This offer was made to him it is reported, a few days ago. The matter is still in consultation stage and the NEC has not yet decided on it. Dr. Orizu was arrested last Monday by the police and his case will be heard on February 9."[4]

Immediately I was arrested, I wanted to give example of a genuine nationalist gentleman and a patriot because in the Western world convention has it that you leave such posts for your party to carry on until you finish the case whether those who arrested you were right or wrong. I knew that my arrest was a ballyhoo, but I wanted to give chance for my fellow colleagues to carry on because I knew that in the end, I must return to join in holding the torch of freedom for Africa. That was the lesson the sit-tight ministers failed to understand. Ironically, someone observed that none of those sit-tight ministers returned to the stage after the tide of freedom washed them away.

With my arrest, many thoughts flowed into my mind. I remembered Dr. Emory Ross of New York who warned me in 1942 at the initial stage of my founding the A.C.A.E. that if I succeeded in my scholarship scheme without letting the colonial masters carry out the program, they would not only stop the program but destroy my character before my people and crush my person[5]. The A.C.A.E. had succeeded. From Nigeria alone, more than fifty students had

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4 I was nominated by the entire party as the Minister of Local Government on January 28, 1953. On January 29, while Oduko was on another duty at Ibadan, he received a telegram to come and prepare summons of my arrest. On January 30-31 he arrived Port Harcourt and prepared summons. On February 2, I was arrested. This shows that the arrest and prosecution was political.

5 On the warning of Dr. Emory Ross. See chapter 16 p. 290.

been sent to America and located in various colleges and universities where they were studying, and this was done without the co-operation of the colonial government against which Dr. Ross warned. I was therefore psychologically ready for character assassination.

My mind went back to the question asked by Mr. Enroll in the British House of Commons early in 1946, "why did the British Nigerian Government allow a certain young man with dangerous Zikist philosophy to influence African Education?" which in effect was an order that the young man should be stopped, from influencing African Education.

Then I remembered the strange nocturnal visit I had in Nnewi and thought to myself, perhaps this is what the warning from the two friends was all about.

Again, I remembered the warning from an Nnewi good samaritan who informed me that he was present when a lawyer of the National Independence Party told them that I was billed for seven years imprisonment in order to keep me away long enough to give them a breathing space and to teach me some lesson.

As I continued to connect things, I also remembered that the Secretary to the colonial government had gone to America much earlier and tried to persuade A.C.A.E. students to gather information to lead to my imprisonment but they did not succeed. This issue was well articulated by one of the scholarship students Hon. Dr. Elochukwu Njaka in his book *Ibo Political Institutions In Transition*, where he stated, inter alia, "Some students interviewed were approached by a government agent, while in the United States, to put the Prince to court, but they refused".[6]

The story of how the Colonial Government buttressed this conspiracy is a part of African history in the process of elimination of imperialism in Africa and will be dealt with in the nest volume.

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6 Hon E. Njaka "Ibo Political Institutions And Transition" (1971) p. 545

Chapter Twenty-Six

THE CRUCIFIXION

To forget everything: dignity, honour and material possessions for the sake of a great life engaged in a righteous war is the noblest of all noble ideals. An empire and conspirators can engineer crucifixion, but they cannot arrest resurrection.

– Nwafor Orizu.

I am fully aware that on September 10, 1957, the British Governor-General, on demand and protest of the members of the Nigerian Parliament, ordered my release from jail before my term was completed, and I received my pardon thereafter. It is therefore clear that discussion on this my crucifixion would normally not have been necessary in this book. But for purposes of history however, I consider it obligatory to make brief mention of why I was chosen by the British Raj to be the sacrificial lamb. Sacrifice and imprisonment for nation building never frightened me ever since I landed in America and followed in detail the paths of Gandhi, Nehru, Sigman Rhee and others. I had thought and believed that spiritual and physical suffering were inevitable counterparts while on the patriotic battlefield.

But Nigeria is not India. Imprisonment, self-denial, hunger, or extreme personal sacrifice in pursuit of peoples' freedom were not spiritualized as in India. When Zikists were imprisoned, they were denied. Everyone ran away. They were looked upon as fools and there was no collective defence in their behalf. When T . K. Utchey suffered extraordinary penance for his educational expansion, he was dubbed fool-hardy and left to perish without honour. When Jaja of Opobo was deported, nobody raised any alarm.

As I have mentioned, this book is not intended to discuss details of my scholarship mission, the A.C.A.E., the trials and triumphs therein. The story of my mission in education in all its ramification is a story for another book by itself. It is clearly evident that I went to jail for my political activities and indeed for political implications and challenges of Horizontal Education.

How was I tried in the court? The answer is that I was not tried in the court. I was jailed without my defending myself. It is a crude and pratically unbelievable phenomenon but it happened and I cannot afford to suppress such a truth.

I employed Nelson Williams as my lawyer and Nnewi people in addition employed J. I. C. Taylor. I prepared my case because it was straightforward. It was a fourteen foolscap paged defence, which I intended not only to expose all the concocted and false accusations, but to demand through the court the debt the British Nigerian government owed me for having transferred a public duty into a personal responsibility.

I planned to invite four witnesses from members of the Executive Board of the A.C.A.E. in America and members of the Board in Nigeria. The case did not touch administration of the A.C.A.E. either in New York or in Nigeria. It did not touch any of the several scores of students in the U.S.A., their administration or funds, but concerned only six students whose scholarships and letters of admission had already been obtained from America and were awaiting their departure to U.S.A., but were being delayed by sudden order of the British Government in Nigeria, preventing my students from leaving Nigerian shores. The sum of money contributed to the general fund of A.C.A.E. is a token amount when compared to the value of the scholarship obtained for each of them. Besides, each of our students had signed form SR[1] showing their knowledge and acceptance of pool system under which the A.C.A.E. operated. Then I handed this defence over to my lawyer and told him how to lead me so that I shall bring out all the points clearly to the world.

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1 For A.C.A.E Form SR, see appendix 5.

After going through this fourteen paged defence and the numerous exhibits attached, my lawyer shrugged his shoulders and told me that he would fix a time for further discussion with me. When we deliberated on the issue the next day, he told me that he met the judge with my defence and after going through, the judge said that I had no case to answer. That it was clear I had done nothing. He said that the judge advised him not to allow me to speak in the court, because there was no need. I asked him why he had to take my defence to the judge. He said that the judge was his relative (both were Sierra Leonians) and he wanted to make sure that we would win the case. I rejected the advice and insisted on defending myself in court and I left him abruptly.

My lawyer went to two most prominent and trusted members of my family in Port-Harcourt (names witheld) to report my refusal to accept the advice of the judge. They called me to a meeting and advised me to comply with the advice of the judge and my lawyer. I protested. They got very angry with me and one of them said: "We feel that your refusal to listen to this advise will cause us trouble, and asked, "do you know more than your lawyer and the judge?" The other supported him with all seriousness. What I found difficult to understand was the whole business of this advice.[2] I felt that they must have sounder reason for acquiescing to this advice. After all, I reasoned, both my lawyer Nelson Williams and the judge Stephen Thomas were Africans. Perhaps, they were against the British government's attitude towards me and my work. But this did not stop me from being unhappy for being asked not to speak. The next morning, J. I. C. Taylor sent Dan Ibekwe from Lagos to join in the case the next day. When I went to see Dan Ibekwe, I told him the full story of why I was not going to speak in the court. He was enraged and looked at me with greatest surprise and said, "even a murderer will defend himself in the court of law. You must speak

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2 I believe that much as their advice proved disastrous, these two family members were unquestioned gentlemen who gave honest advice in the light of their own understanding, knowing the tremendous influence lawyers wielded in the minds of the people during the period.

and that is why I am here now from Lagos." I told him that I had already assured my family members that I was going to comply with advice of my lawyer. In a harsh tone of voice like a disappointed soldier he said to me, "I do not understand what you are saying, I am going back to Lagos immediately. Tell Nnewi people to send J. I. C. Taylor a cheque for £700. They must have to pay for all the preparations we made and our trip from Lagos. We know you have done nothing and why they advise you not to speak in the court is a mystery. He flapped his papers violently and stood up.

I came back to report what Dan Ibekwe said to my relatives and requested that three of us go to see Dan Ibekwe. They refused and still maintained that we will not speak in court. Then the case continued. I continued to go between the court and the N.C.N.C. meetings. One of those days, I lost a two year old daughter Nnebedum. I drove home for her burial. The next morning, I had to rush back to Port Harcourt for the case. I was five minutes late to the court after the case was called. The judge expressed annoyance and said that that was a contempt of court, and ordered me to be remanded in prison custody for four days.

So while the case was on, I was in prison for four days. My senior brother Prince J. O. Orizu defended himself in the court during those four days of my absence. Immediately I came out, I was called up for my own defence. Religiously abiding by the advice of my lawyer and relatives I simply said I had no case to answer and the case was closed awaiting the judgement day.

On September 15, 1953, I woke up early, prayed. I took my bath. No breakfast. My boy Charles Modekwe joined me to the court. I had no car, no driver. We hired a taxi on our way. We met John Ihekwoaba of Nkwerre. He asked me where I was going and I told him. He came near me, dipped his hand into his pocket and gave me a sum of fifty pounds and said, "This is all I can do for you sir, *Chukwu dube gi*," in a trembling voice. He shook his head and turned back. We marched on. When John gave me this money, I remembered that all I had in the bank was five pounds. I handed over this fifty pounds to Charles Modekwe my boy to deposit for me in the bank. This made my only earthly savings while in the

prison amount to fifty five pounds. I had no other personal account anywhere in the world. Every money I had in the United States was turned to the scholarship scheme. And here in Nigeria, scarcely did I collect my small allowance as a member of the House. And when I did, it was for my personal needs and that of my family since I never considered it necessary to think of self. All my waking hours were given for nationalism.

We arrived at the court by 7.30 a.m. At 9.00 a.m. the Judge appeared. The judgement began. It was interpreted in Ibo. The Judge first said that whatever judgement he was going to give this morning was not influenced only by what was presented to him in the court, but by other news and rumours he got from outside before the case ever started. Whether he wrote this remark in his own judgement book, I do not know. After thorough condemnation of myself and my senior brother without mentioning that there was anything good about my educational crusade on the continent of Africa, he declared that I was sentenced to seven years imprisonment and my senior brother four years. Then he emphasized: "Orizu is a very intelligent man, he heard all accusations made against him before the court, I am therefore surprised that he did not speak in self defence." What a black mail! To me this was incredible. Could it be that my lawyer was not honest and deceived my family members or what? The whole thing embarrassed me. Who in the world would believe me, that with all my power of articulation and courage to say no, that I could have yielded to an advice not to defend myself in court? What could have been my reason? But I have already uttered, "no case to answer" and the case was closed. The God in me said "Close your mouth Nwafor, God sees you." I looked at my lawyer with a sense of pity and disdain which I concealed. This was amazing and an unprecedented strategy by my enemies, I said to myself, "how could Stephen Thomas blame me when indeed I was told that he advised that I should plead 'no case to answer'? Is it possible that Stephen Thomas gave this advice or was it a hoax?"

I knew that nobody was talking justice there. It was malice against God. It was conspiracy against truth; a crucifixion engineered by political enemies. And I remembered the nocturnal visit to Nnewi

which I had mentioned earlier where I was told about a trap set for me if I allowed Eastern Regional government to be dissolved[3]. Right away, my respect for justice in that court, petered out. Confidence in my mission to Africa and Nigeria grew more and I felt that after all, it was worth the while to suffer for our beliefs. Quite often had I announced willingness to die for a cause. Now I have arrived. My tremendous power of resistance and obligation to say No yielded to the weight of over-confidence that is rooted in absolute innocence and a free conscience. I then understood Shakespeare's Artemidorus in Julius Caesar where he said: "Caesar beware of Brutus; take heed of Cassius, come not near Casca; have an eye to Cinna; trust not Trebonius; mark well Metelus Cimber; Decius Brutus loves thee not; thou hast wronged Caius Ligarius: There is but one mind in all these men and it is bent against Caesar. If thou beest not immortal, look about you. Security gives way to conspiracy. The mighty God defend thee". They said I had no case to answer, and I believed it because I knew that I had no case to answer. But now it sounded juvenile and simplistic. Perhaps, it is destiny – a fulfilment.

On this basis, I declared in the court: "I have served my country and whatever suffering this brings to me, I am not worried." There were sighing, weeping and murmuring in the court. We were then led out as prisoners into the police car towards Golgotha as if for crucifixion.

At 11.35 a.m. on September 15, 1953, the romance of the cross in my life began. At that moment, the prison gates were opened for me and my brother. Very happy, very courageous, very contemptuous of an empire of cowardly and corrupt officers in the government and judiciary, I was defiant, I remembered Nehru and Gandhi. When I thought of Stephen Thomas, I remembered Pilate of Rome.

From the warnings of Emory Ross in the United States in 1942 that I shall be crushed before my people, to the warnings of the British Parliament to stop a certain young man with a dangerous Zikist philosophy from influencing African education, to the warnings

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3 Pages 476 – 478 show how I did this.

of a certain nocturnal visitor during the period when I championed the downfall of the Eastern Nigerian Regional Assembly to the S.O.S. of Governor Pleas to the then Governor-General "to either get Orizu out of Eastern House of Assembly or he would quit," after the "Clement Pleas you are nonsense" episode, I knew that my hour had come. The court used my Treasurer to play the Judas. When Jesus was accused, he refused to speak but he was a God. I was not a God. I am an ordinary human being. I did not refuse to speak. Ingenious conspiracy silenced my tongue.

As for my lawyer, my own impression of lawyers in history, is that great lawyers have made their names in their brilliant defence of their clients particularly in defence of the oppressed against a tyrant. Legal ethics is also in support of this. So there was no time I felt unsafe in the hands of my own lawyer. The issues were as clear as crystal. Therefore, I did not have cause to entertain any fears for my lawyer's advice.

It was clear that the dissolved House of Assembly in which I played a major role called for reconstitution. There was then a call for new election. Zik and I belonged to Onitsha Division therefore Zik was seeking election for the first time from this Division. It would be noted that during the election into the first Eastern House of Assembly, I was the first member for the Onitsha Province, and I went as an independent candidate and not as a member of any party. Because of this, I was personally involved with the electorate who had already developed enormous confidence in me. They also looked upon me as their sure candidate.

Now that new election was about to be held, I was out of the scene. The general masses of the Onitsha Division whom I represented gave an ultimatum to the N.C.N.C. that they would not vote for them or any other party until I participated. The Nnewi people insisted that I should come out first before the election was conducted so that I would represent them. When the immediate impossibility of those conditions was made clear to them, Nnewi people opted that it must be another of their son who should go to represent me with my approval until I came out. The N.C.N.C. agreed on this compromise and asked them to produce a candidate from Nnewi.

This time, three persons from Nnewi presented themselves. They were L. P. Ojukwu, C. C. Mojekwu and Ejike Chidolue. The N.C.N.C. could not immediately decide on a particular candidate among the three. The N.C.N.C. decided to consult me with the names for my approval.

On the morning of October 18, 1953, I was summoned to the office of the Superintendent of Prisons. Surprisingly, I saw Zik, Ojike, Chief Asinobi, Z. C. Obi, V. K. Onyeri, K. O. Mbadiwe, M. D. Okechukwu and others. I thought they came in for my release. The Superintendent changed his method of allowing us to see visitors. In this case, chairs were given to all these visitors and for the first time a chair was given to me, in Assistant Superintendent's Office. Mr. Conroy, the Assistant Superintendent of Prisons didn't stand too close to us as I talked to them. He was quite courteous and gentlemanly. When I walked in, these men all rose to welcome me with warm handshakes. They were all in good health. Z. C. Obi whispered for me to see Zik, Ojike and Mbadiwe separately to discuss Nnewi election which was the reason for their visit. I beckoned Zik, Ojike and Mbadiwe. We stood apart, Zik spoke, "Prince, we know that you are a man of your own conviction and we have no doubt that your unquestioned courage will continue to make you understand that we feel with you and shall do anything possible to quicken your release from here. As you know, you are billed to be one of the elected members of the House once more for Onitsha Division. The party has sent us here to let you know that the electorate wanted you before they would give the N.C.N.C. their votes. We explained to them the difficulty of your immediate release and promised them that we shall see you to select from the party any one from Nnewi as they desired. The three names of the Nnewi aspirants are L. P. Ojukwu, C. C. Mojekwu and Ejike Chidolue. They said that any one of them you select to represent you will be voted for by all only to quit when you are released. We are here to get your consent about this desire of Nnewi people and the general electorate of Onitsha Division". It was difficult for me to make such decision since in my opinion all three of them were my good friends. The only difference in my mind was that I met Ejike Chidolue in standard

six when I entered elementary school. He was very brilliant and used to be first in his class. In one of the concerts in the school entitled "who killed Saliwancer", he played a very scintillating role under the Head Master, Mr. B. I. C. Onubogu. Besides, it appeared to me that he was more N.C.N.C. than the other two. So I recommended him to represent me. Zik and his group thanked me and left. During the ensuing election, I understood that Ejike Chidolue scored the highest mark among the candidates of Onitsha Division. It is ironical that after this election, Ejike Chidolue did not thank me nor did he visit me even one day in the prison yard or visit my family members during the whole period. But L. P. Ojukwu visited and comforted my mother, wives and family during this period.

Now, a new Eastern House of Assembly was constituted, after the downfall of the first House and Zik went into the House and became the Premier. This gave me the greatest satisfaction of my life. As long as the march of independence went on, any man's blood spilt on the road would be a blessing to the nation. It would have been a tragic experience to throw Zik out of Western Region through the episode of unprecedented carpet crossing, and then leave the Eastern House in the hands of those inexperienced in the art of imperialistic diplomacy and nation building while Zik would be playing a minority role in the House of Representatives. I thanked my God for this. If my efforts to make this situation impossible for the imperialists and their Nigerian collaborators have made me a nationalistic dog to be given a bad name and hanged, then imperialism in Nigeria has won a phyrric victory. They were handling a defiant soul, unrepentant irredentist and a permanent thorn in the flesh of the body of the tyrants.

There was one interesting episode; one of the members of the dissolved Eastern House of Assembly from Owerri Division visited me at the time. Immediately he saw me, he called me a name, "*Nwoke nucha ogu*", I didn't understand him. He repeated, "I said that your name is now '*Nwoke nucha ogu, nwanyi a naa aka.*'"[4] I asked him

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4 Ibo proverb meaning after a battle is fought by man, women exchange the sword of victory.

what he meant, he said, "we think that after you have fought valiantly at the Eastern House of Assembly, you are now suffering here while those who did very little are reaping the benefits of your labour". Little did he know that my harvest of the victory was a spiritual one and reserved for me by the God of Africa whom I serve.

When I learnt that Foster Sutton was going to preside over my appeal at the West African Court of Appeal, I knew that the appeal would fail. He nearly removed the wig of J. I. C. Taylor when the learned Attorney who knew first hand from Dan Ibekwe the true story of my being silent in Port Harcourt court, the secret and conspiracy surrounding my sentence, insisted that I did not speak in Justice Stephen Thomas' Court and that the case must be retried. Foster Sutton threatened that if he repeated that, he would be punished for contempt of court. After three courageous attempts, J. I. C. Taylor was silenced before the imperial court. The agent of the emperor had spoken, and justice was murdered in cold blood.

On the news of the failure of my appeal at the W.A.C.A, (West African Court of Appeal) I knew that my real self must usher and carry the day. The intended mortal wound lost its effect. All unjust or mortal wounds in history which always ended in being nailed to the cross have always ended in unsuspected and unexpected brightest morning of resurrection. That I knew. That I hoped for. All engineers of crucifixion had never devised a means of arresting resurrection. To forget everything; dignity, honour and material possession for the sake of a great life which was engaged in a righteous war is the noblest of all noble ideals.

Now my colleagues – Zik, Ojike, Mbadiwe, Nkrumah, Ako Adjei had taken up ministerial posts. Zik the Premier took over my portfolio in Enugu as Minister of Local Government. Nothing was more victorious than to see my other colleagues at the helm of affairs in a political party conceived and dedicated to the principle of democracy and abrogation of colonialism. My not being there, in my opinion, was a matter of destiny. I knew I shall join them later when the spirit and soul of mother Nigeria, shall have ousted foreign rulers all over Nigeria. With this spirit, I got myself adjusted to carry the cross handed over to me.

One morning, at about 10.00 a.m., the Superintendent of Prisons himself with one warder behind him, marched into my cell. He brought out one letter and opened it before me. He read it. As he was about to hand me over the letter to read, he broke into tears and wiped his face with his handkerchief. I was surprised. I did not read the letter. I put it down on the table and asked him why. "Being a Nigerian", he said, "but for a person like you, and you alone, people of my age group could not have gotten such posts as Superintendent. I feel uncomfortable to see you continue to stay here. Honestly I ...." I read the letter dated 16/10/53 addressed to Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe from New York City by Mr. Roy Wilkins which reads as follows:

AIR MAIL

(N.A.A.C.P. Letter Head)
October 16, 1953
New York City N.Y.

Dear Dr. Azikiwe,

I was greatly shocked to hear today for the first time of the trial and sentencing of Dr. A. A. Nwafor Orizu on allegations of certain persons in Nigeria as to his handling of funds in connection with the project known as the American Council on African Education. I am writing you not officially as an officer of N.A.A.C.P., but as Chairman of the A.C.A.E. in the United States.

We have no knowledge of the details of the Nigerian situation but we do know on this side that the A.C.A.E. is a movement to the zeal, devotion and love of his country on the part of Dr. Orizu. While here, he devoted every waking moment to furthering the building of the project so that it could serve more and more Nigerian students. He was determined to build an organization that would offer them an opportunity to get education in American colleges. I cannot begin to describe in detail the singleness of purpose and his constant unremitting activity towards this objective. It is inconceivable

to us over here that Dr. Orizu could be accused, much less convicted, of a charge of fraud.

No one has made any penny out of the operation started by Dr. Orizu which has resulted in bringing over and educating 53 young Nigerians under auspices of the A.C.A.E. In fact, the operation had been successful because colleges, students themselves and number of American citizens have sacrificed and worked hard to make much out of little. If Dr. Orizu had one fault, it was that his ambition for the youth of Nigeria and his determination to open up American college education to them regardless of obstacles led him to neglect certain business safe-guards which would have made the going a little easier. He was a great crusader for his people and his urge on one object only. Crusaders are seldom good businessmen and very often their zeal for a cause leads them into courses of action which *sober* and calculating businessmen would not advise. However, there is no evidence in all the operations here that Dr. Orizu committed any errors which could be classed as deliberate, evil, or selfish. There is not an *iota* of evidence that he misused any funds which came into his possession. There is no scintilla of evidence that he transferred to his own use funds entrusted to him for his great project. Errors in judgement he might have made. Omissions with respect to record keeping he might have also made, but these do not involve the misappropriation of the funds collected for the great purpose to other uses than those necessary to carry on the project.

I can say to you unhesitatingly and unequivocally that there would have been no A.C.A.E. and there would have been 53 fewer young Nigerians educated in American colleges in the past several years had it not been for the fierce and unwavering determination of Dr. Orizu to carry through the project.

His burning desire was to get Nigerians to America and by some means or other to get them through American colleges. He has nothing to gain from this except to see his young men from his country prepare themselves to lead their country to independence in the family of nations. The operation was not a perfect one, because no one is perfect. It was beset with many difficulties. The Government

of Nigeria was not friendly to the project. The British did not look upon it with any enthusiasm. The Government of United States had many rules and regulations which had to be observed. The students came to a strange new land and some of the conditions they found were not, perhaps as they had dreamed they would be. The colleges presented some difficulties. The matters of food and lodging, of summer vacation work, all added to the burden of Dr. Orizu and of the American Committee. The task of providing a house in metropolitan New York where Nigerian students could live more cheaply than they could in hotels or commercial rooming houses was a great one. The .naintenance of this house, keeping it in repair, paying for heat, light and other services, meeting mortgage payments etc. placed a great strain on everyone concerned.

Under these circumstances you can understand our shock and dismay at the news that Dr. Orizu's effort have been met with charges of fraud and conviction in the courts with a heavy sentence imposed. I do not here offer any criticism of the court or Nigerian laws, but I do suggest that the whole story of this man's singular devotion to an objective could have been spread before his people, and perhaps a different situation might have developed.

With greetings to you and your fellow countrymen in your great work for Nigerian independence, Amen.

Very sincerely yours
Signed (Roy Wilkins)

I was told that copies of this letter were sent to Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello and Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Shortly after this, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the Action Group leader sent a delegation of five persons to see me in prison. They came in company of some friends. I was surprised to see the leaders of the Action Group who said: "Our Party feel that you have done nothing to deserve your staying here any longer and we have been mandated by Action Group leader, Chief Awolowo, to tell you that Action Group is prepared to and can get you out of this place immediately, if you resign from the N.C.N.C. and leave Zik alone."

That was a pleasant surprise to me, I replied: "Please tell Chief Awolowo of my pleasant surprise and unforgettable emotional attachment I have for this historic gesture, but I shall give him reply later for the proposal of my resigning from the N.C.N.C. party and leaving Zik alone. You will hear from me soon." Soon after, I sent a message to Chief Awolowo to say that as a matter of principle, I could not at that juncture resign from the N.C.N.C. in which I played an inestimable role to install and stabilize in the Eastern Region and for which I was a sacrificial lamb. When the Eastern friends insisted on my following Awolowo for easy release from the prison, I burst into emotional spell and I said: "No nation, no religion has ever been built except with the blood of a sacrificial few on the eve of Good Fridays awaiting resurrection morn. Founders of nations must be men of integrity. Integrity implies abiding by constant principles and looking for no easy way of escape from clinging to eternal truth. Nothing is more paradoxical than the life of a pioneer. I consider it an illusion for a pioneer to start a mission or direct his life against a bad institution, if at first counter move by the tyrant he proposes to abandon the fight. The kind of integrity required by a nation builder amounts to the courage that is as persistent as it is profound. He must be ready to pay the prize for it. It is his duty to allow himself to be broken rather than to betray. That is my fate. So long as you find men and women with the integrity of pioneers, you will have the corresponding persons fitted to berd on destroying them only to find in the end that the seeming failure of a genuine pioneer is a symbol of his ultimate and eternal victory. I therefore ask you fervently to give my appreciation and thanks to Chief Awolowo and Action Group whom I shall hold in respect and high regard all my life".

These friends began to ask, "what did Zik say and what did the N.C.N.C. do about this your case? Do you know that you were imprisoned at the time Jomo Kenyetta was imprisoned in Kenya? Did you hear that Zik sent some party members to Kenya with £500 (five hundred pounds) to aid Kenyetta in prison? How much did the N.C.N.C. send to you and your family? After all, was it not from Eastern House of Assembly where you were fighting Governor Pleas

for the N.C.N.C. that you were arrested with false charges?" They looked at me to give answers to their questions. My face was deliberately blank and I said nothing. Then one of them continued, "If a man of your calibre were in Awolowo's Action Group and supported Awolowo the way you did in the N.C.N.C. and Eastern House of Assembly, everybody in Nigeria believes that Awolowo would have acted differently in your defence". Again I said nothing. For a while there was a general silence – ominous silence. I knew nothing about N.C.N.C.'s visit to Kenya. I am also aware that the same forces that planned my crucifixion are working so hard to crucify Zik.

The only significant thing is that Zik did not tell me about that letter from Roy Wilkins up till today. I also knew that it was a copy of this letter which was sent to Awolowo that made him to react the way he did, quite apart from the fact that Awolowo is a great respecter and admirer of my book *Without Bitterness* even though it was there I made Zik a demi-god in my philosophy of Zikism. I also know that neither N.C.N.C. as a party nor Zik visited my family throughout the time I was in prison although some party members as individuals such as K. O. Mbadiwe and G. E. Okeke visited and comforted them. I let this episode in my prison life sink and be forgotten in order to allow me to carry my own cross as I promised my God that I deserved a real punishment from the British Empire because I embarrassed and harassed them more than any other person among my group, looking at my activities from America to Nigeria between 1940 to 1953 as evident in some of my writings.[5] I was a number one iconoclast, breaking and destroying all imperialistic images with intellectual and academic incendiaries and with all heavy hammer and tools with which pillars and walls of the imperial edifice were turned into debris.

Shortly after I was in prison, Governor Clement Pleas visited the prison yard. He came to my special cell to see me. When he entered the cell with the Superintendent of Prison, he greeted me.

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5 *Without Bitterness*; Zikism – African Continental Philosophy, Africa Speaks, Horizontal Education, etc.

"Good morning Orizu." I did not respond. He greeted me again. I kept quiet. Then he greeted me a third time, I grudgingly replied, "morning". He went into the sitting room, looked around and saw my books there displayed on the rack. He asked the Superintendent of Prison who owned these books? We replied that some were mine and a good many were prison's books. He looked around once more and turned back to go then he said, "thank you Dr.. Orizu" and left. I remained silent.

About the same time, Justice Stephen Thomas also visited the prison yard. When he came to the special cell, he was outside and I was inside. I stood out and turned my face towards him. I looked right straight into his eyes and fixed my gaze on him for a long time. His face fell, he was unable to look at me in the face. I turned my face. He turned away from the gate and left the prison yard.

One of the greatest sorrows of my absence from the Eastern House of Assembly and the N.C.N.C. as a national party was the setting up of Foster Sutton Tribunal which triggered disruption in the House. During this my absence, it appeared to me that Zik did not have anybody in the House sufficiently enamoured or politically experienced or deeply loyal to nip the out-burst of E. O. Eyo in the bud. When I was in the House while Zik was in Lagos E. O. Eyo was next only to John Nwodo as my lieutenants. Both were powerful speakers and courageous defenders of the party. E. O. Eyo himself visited me in prison to make some complaints and regretted my absence, with utter bitterness. After Chuba Ikpeazu's tribunal, Mbonu Ojike had died, thus eliminating one of Zik's loyalists. These things disturbed me immensely. But for the timely mass action, which saved Zik from Forster Sutton pronouncement of a guilty verdict, the cross current and boomerangs would have eliminated Zik, Ojike and myself from the political scene, when independence of Nigeria was around the corner. It was one of the finest hours of Nigeria's political history when the soul of Eastern Nigerians cried aloud to ignore the guilty verdict of Foster Sutton and my leader Zik took the mantle of his leadership again as the Premier of Eastern Region. I considered this a great victory. What pained me was the circumstances surrounding Ojike's fall and death.

Inside the prison I continued the education mission for which I was serving a sentence. My relationship with warders was very cordial. I organized classes for young and ambitious warders right inside the prison yard where I prepared them for School Certificate Examinations. While I lost my liberty for education, I spent my time here liberating the minds of under-privileged warders and prisoners to make them more aware and more useful members of the society. One of my students, a native of Mbaise went overseas and became a lawyer. Two intelligent warders, one a native of Atani and the other an Efik passed their School Certificate during this period. One other of my young prison warder students wrote me an interesting letter which was excavated from my files only recently. In this letter he wrote in part,

> "Take this from me and put it in your mind that youth, who are the trustees of posterity are on your side ... I must ever be for you. I must ever speak your praise. I must say good of you, for you are patient, you are without bitterness. You are a genius."
>
> Signed:
> Brimon O. O. Umeh
> H.M. Convict Prison
> Port Harcourt, September, 1955.

This letter of Brimon Umeh summarizes my relationship with some of the prison inmates.

I shall not forget the role of Catholic missionaries while I was in the prison yard. They visited, ministered to, gave gifts and tried to make my life quite comfortable. Among them was the then principal of Q.R.C. (Queen of the Rosary College, Onitsha) and her fellow Sisters who used to join her from Port Hacourt. They visited me every fortnight reporting the welfare of my family in Nnewi whom they also visited and comforted, regularly. While this went on, I had written more than twenty four chapters of my autobiography (draft) then entitled "Before I Die". On September 10, 1957, I was released from prison.

I was arrested on the premises of the Eastern House of Assembly which all honest Nigerians knew was a political arrest.My coming out started at the house of representatives when Hon. Osita Agwuna (now His Royal Highness) moved a motion for my release. Thereafter,the Hon. J. M. Johnson the then minister of Internal Affairs in reply to Hon. Osita Agwuna's motion, announced in the House of Representatives that the Governor General of the Federation Sir James Robertson had ordered my release. The beginning and end of this episode are paradoxical. That representatives of all Nigeria – North, East and West resolved and demanded from the British government in Nigeria to release me for whatever reason,was the romance of crucifixion and resurrection. The cross from the House of Assembly was replaced with crown from the House of Representatives. In the office of the then Chief Superintendent of Prisons Giwa Osagie, a son of Benin aristocracy, he gave me an official salute and uttered: "thank God I have done my duty to Nigeria. You are now a free person Sir!"

On the exterior, people saw me as a robust, relaxed and confident pioneer. For whatever reason, my optimism about the possibilities of Nigeria's future heightened. I felt that the margin between our state of slavery and the emergence of national sovereignty had diminished into thin air. When therefore the doors of the prison yard were banged behind me, and I was walking towards the garden city, I knew that behind me was colonialism and infront of me was the shrine of liberty. I saw myself walking towards the era of freedom in a new born nation. The white man was on his way out. The inevitability of black man's rule of Africa's most populous country was axiomatic.

Pride and humility caught my soul. This romantic era in my life made me align myself with the spirit of Gandhi and Nehru and Sigman Rhee. I have paid the prize of integrity. I have drunk the Hemlock of Golgotha. And Zik's letter to me dated 24–9–57 among others encouraged me. Zik wrote as follows:

Premier's Lodge
Enugu, Nigeria

24th September, 1957

Dr. Nwafor Orizu,
c/o The Obi of Nnewi,
Nnewi.

My dear Dr Orizu:

I am writing in order to welcome you home after passing through the ordeal of fire, which is the penalty leaders must pay.

I would have written earlier but for two reasons: in the first place I was down with 'flu for three weeks and I am just convalescing; in the second place I thought that I would be fully recovered in order to pay a short visit to Nnewi and offer you my heartiest congratulations in person. Unfortunately, during my last visit to Port Harcourt I had a relapse and decided to return home immediately for medical attention.

I assure you, however, that at the earliest opportunity I will come over to Nnewi in order to see you and shake your hand, and give you words of encouragement to enable you to start life afresh, undiminished in vigour and unswerving in your loyalty to the cause of Nigerian freedom, for which most of us have suffered so much.

It is not for me to pre-judge issues, but I can assure you that during the interlude since we last saw each other a lot has happened to destroy the spirit of the most fervent patriot. This statement can refer to you or to me or to any of the "Argonauts" who sailed from this country almost twenty years ago in quest of the Golden Fleece.

This is not a time for words. Deeds are much more effective and I hope that when we meet we shall exchange views and plan the future.

In the meantime, will you continue to keep a stout heart and an iron will, for a man may be down but not out.

Fraternally yours,

NNAMDI AZIKIWE
Premier of Eastern Nigeria.

My spiritual elevation continued to rise in crescendo. My educational mission I could not abandon. Back to Nnewi, I revived the building of the Nigerian Secondary School, from where I continued my scholarship scheme, Mrs Macauley's dream was not in vain. I made my scholarship offers without reserve with the motto of my school, "To educate the mind is to liberate it". When this was done, I answered my call for personal participation in active politics. Having gone through the House of Assembly, the House of Chiefs, the House of Representatives, I became a senator in 1960. On March 14, 1964, I was elected President of the Senate and in 1965 I was re-elected for a second term. From head of the parliament to the acting Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. How these happened is the brief story of the next two chapters.

SECTION VII

THE RISE, DECLINE AND FALL OF THE FIRST REPUBLIC

This section discusses Orizu's experience and philosophy as the Acting President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for virtually four months. It was during his time that the remote and immediate causes of the decline and fall of the first Republic converged. The tremendous edifices of tribal and religious fanaticism staggered and yielded to the pressure of their own weights, just like Gibbons Roman Empire.

In the midst of confusion, assassinations and breakdown of all laws and all orders, the Nigerian Armed Forces found themselves in the arena. Then the first Nigerian Republic was turned into military dictatorship. The light of democracy quenched on January 16th, 1966. Here Orizu puts to the nation and the world his state of mind as a nationalist and his philosophy of action as a statesman, whose main pre-occupation was not to remain in power, but to preserve the unity and eternal existence of the nation to which he gave all his time and life as one of the founders. Patriotism talked aloud.

– Editor

Chapter Twenty-Seven

TOWARDS COMPLETE FREEDOM

There is no influence strong enough to hold the tide of freedom from overflowing the limits of man-made shores in order to set people free.

– Nwafor Orizu.

What gave me the greatest satisfaction was that my scholarship programme and the progress of all the men and women I sent to America expanded in ratio to the pressure and blackmail from colonialists. A good number of those boys who left in 1947, 1948 and 1949 had returned to Nigeria. Most of them were embarrassed when they applied for jobs under the colonial civil service or European mercantile establishments and were offered ridiculous salaries when compared with their counterparts from European universities. Professor Babs Fafunwa's experience as recorded in his autobiography[1] is an extant example of the difficulties these students who went to America experienced. This not withstanding, I was resolute more than ever before to continue my mission in education.

At this point, I was penniless. Life then was all suspension, loneliness and want. I had no car. To do any thing, I had to borrow or hire cars. I personally had no landed property in Nnewi at that time. It was all hand to mouth existence.

Then I used to visit the premises of my proposed Nigeria Secondary School to see what had happened to the only classroom building I set up in 1950. The whole place had become a hunting

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1 A. Babs Fafunwa, Up and On! A Nigerian Teacher's Odyssey (Nigeria: West African Book Publishers, 1990).

ground and the school building itself had become a rendezvous for night marauders and highway robbers in my absence; bones of cooked animals, broken black pots, tattered knives and matchets were the tenants of the school which I built.

As I was contemplating on the way to revive my educational institution while at the same time paying attention to the emergence of political independence, the people of the then Onitsha Southern District with its headquarters in Nnewi paid me a visit. They said that they wanted me to go back to the House of Assembly as their representative. They would ask any one member from Nnewi Division in the House to step down for me. I hesitated to accept the offer. Chief Uzor of Ukpor, an ex-Chief Warder rose up and told me that if finance was my restraint, that Ukpor town resolved and mandated him to tell me and Nnewi Division that they would take care of whatever expenses it might entail to get me back into the House. That Nnewi Division will not put a penny in it. This statement of Chief Uzor made me very humble. My gratitude to Ukpor people was deep and abiding. Among the principal speakers on that occasion were Chiefs George Nnubia of Ozubulu, Umeagugoesi and Joseph Ezeoke of Amichi, Oluoha of Ihiala, Obodojie of Okija, Ezike Ijezie of Utuh, Olikagu of Lilu, H. O. Nwosu and J. M. Nwosu of Nnewichi, Nnewi, Godfrey Unegbu of Oraifite, Ezeonufo of Umudim, Nnewi, Zephniah Ojukwu of Uruagu, Nnewi, Nathaniel O. Ubachukwu of Ichi, Chief Anagbogu Onwusilikam of Nnewi, Unigwe of Osumenyi, M. D. Okechukwu of Ukpor, Umeokiche and Epuechi of Unubi, Umeagbu of Azigbo and others from Ebenato, Ezinifite, Ekwulu, Osumenyi. Benson Okoli, Chief L. N. E. Nsoedo, Chief Jeremiah Okoli, Sir Augustine Metu and Abel Okoye all from Nnewi. All rose up one after the other to persuade me to go back to the House. I was very much moved by this resolution. I told them I would give them a final answer within seven days. Shortly after, I published it in the press that I was not prepared to go back to the Eastern House of Assembly and asked my friends and supporters to bear with me.

While now engaged in the building of my school, the era of Constitutional process by which Nigeria shall obtain Independence

after the London Conference of 1957, became the order of the day. The three major regional governments – the North, East and West which were controlled by the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), the National Council of Nigeria and Camerouns (NCNC), and the Action Group (AG) respectively, were set to open political campaigns for leadership in the centre. This election took place in 1959. Between 1958 and 1959, I was compelled by passion of private commitment to education to open the Nigeria Secondary School in Nnewi as a part of improvement for Independence before joining the bandwagon of NCNC activity uninhibitedly. By January, 1959 the School was opened. This was very difficult for me, but as soon as academic and administrative organizations were set, coupled with settlement of land space, building construction and equipment, my attention became devoted to national politics.

Honestly, I have never been an excellent partisan politician and had never been at home with tribal discussions and interests in my political philosophy. My close observation was that an overwhelming majority of party members were either tribally oriented or immature commercial politicians. The only person I understood his language was Zik. I also think that perhaps he understood me in this regard. I found that nothing was more difficult for a genuine nationalist than to control and discipline tribalists and disguised interest groups while pursuing a purely national purpose. Some times a nationalist would find himself in a position where he could not lead any body without aligning himself somehow with a particular interest group, and within each tribe a particular section or family group or individual ambition. If a leader thinks he can do without this understanding, he will find himself in troubled waters of alienation, condemnation and castigation. This in my opinion is the greatest political problem of leadership in Nigeria. That is why Azikiwe who was like Gandhi and Nehru in African continental context was finally manoeuvred into what looked like a tribal defender. That is why with all his efficiency and nationalistic fervour, Awolowo is known to all other parts of Nigeria as a Yoruba leader. That is why, while Sir Ahmadu Bello, with all his potential to lead a nation even bigger than Nigeria, did not penetrate the minds of the populace beyond the North. I

saw the Nigeria I conceived all my life, tottering into shrines of gods and goddesses or into fragments of primitive lakes none of which had any outlet to flow into the other in order to form a mighty river of a nation upon which the floating boat of unity will be large enough to accommodate and convey the entire Nigeria to the shores of one national life – indivisible. That was the time I made a speech at Emy Cinema Hall in Aba titled –"The Leadership We Want".[2]

The result of 1959 election was the hand writing on the wall giving unequivocal warning that the expectation of a single leadership at that time was too early a dream. Two historic events buttressed this point – The carpet-crossing in the Western House of Assembly and a zero score of the NCNC/NEPU coalition in the whole of the North. These events were tribal messages from the Western and Northern Regions, to the dreamers of a new Nigeria under one leadership coming from any of the tribes. This is true because even the NPC and Action Group made no serious impact upon Eastern Region.

Nkrumah got Independence for Ghana in 1957 without significant tribal inhibitions, and there was a nation called Ghana under one accepted leadership. Gandhi and Nehru secured Indian Independence as a whole nation under the Congress Party in 1947, again with overall majority and without significant tribalistic inhibitions, Jinah's Pakistan not withstanding. And again there emerged an Indian nation under single acceptable leadership.

In Nigeria, the 1959 election preceding Independence signified that there were three self contained leaders rooted in tribal, religious or geographical anchorages. The assumption of a Jomo Kenyetta, Gandhi or Nyerere was immediately ruled out for Nigeria.

One thing was clear. These three leaders of political parties were wise and patriotic. Wise because they had a positive direction. Patriotic because they showed that they loved Nigeria more than their tribes. Their sense of direction made them to insist on the policy of getting Independence from the British without minding their

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2 Nwafor Orizu, The Leadership We Want, (Nigeria. Horizontal Publishers, 1959), pp. 5-15.

differences. Their patriotism made it possible for them to ignore all the conflicts and come together for what might be considered a coalition or national government. There was NCNC President and NPC Prime Minister; there was NCNC Senate President and NPC Speaker of the House of Representatives; there was Action Group Chief Justice of the Federation. But on the historical Notice Board, was a bold inscription that there was not one Nigerian leader totally in-charge of the national government in a manner that George Washington presided over America after they secured Independence from the British Empire. The three largest tribes created regional Assemblies for themselves. And tended to swallow all the minority groups in their areas into their own folds, quite uncomfortably.

From my own concept of nationhood in the modern world, I considered this state of affairs a bizarre formation which would result in unending disunity in Nigeria. The greatest political crisis of Nigeria, was therefore lack of permanent loyalty to leadership such as we find in other countries that have grown in strength and stability. We must accept the fact that our tendency not to be loyal to our leaders even during the early stages of our national struggle, is responsible for Nigeria's instability – economically, politically and internationally. That is why it is possible for anybody in military uniform to jump into the stage any time and declare himself the president or head of state. Because *in any group large or small, wherever there is no internal discipline, control comes from outside.* It is unfortunate that Nigerians have not realized that military men cannot rule Nigeria if civilians are disciplined.

Throughout my stay in U.S. my whole life had been for Africa – African Students Association, African Interpreter, American Council on African Education, Without Bitterness – Western Nations in Post War Africa, Africa Speaks. All these organizations and writings have to do with Africa and they consumed my whole time in America. Even my philosophy of Zikism I considered an African continental philosophy. I never thought about working only for Nigeria, how much more about working for only one town or tribe inside Nigeria.

At no time did I join any political party to get a commercially oriented post in order to amass wealth either for myself, my relatives or my tribe or town. Perhaps, I might have been mistaken in this concept. What happened was that to be a member of government was never my preoccupation. As things stood at that time, nobody was on my way. I was not in any way hindered. If anything at all, I had several offers of positions from beginning to the end of my political career. I graciously but deliberately played absent-mindedness. I knew that in all parties, men and women of integrity and patriotism were abundant.

Therefore, we all fought for independence and got it. This was accomplished on October 1, 1960. The British government gave an example of a nation and a people with fear of God in pursuing liberty and freedom. After the ceremonies, I drove straight home satisfied that Nigeria has become a free nation. A day I can never forget. There was another happy surprise. As I entered into my senator's flat in Victoria Island, I met an American, Mr. George Berry, from Columbus Ohio. He was the man who first offered me a part-time job of dish-washing at his Cheaserpeak Restaurant in 1940 during my student days in the Ohio State University. This job provided for my breakfast. He was a kind gentleman. He came all the way from Columbus Ohio to participate in this great celebration for my sake. I was overjoyed. Before my arrival, my wife had already made him at home. It was when he wanted to go in for the night and change his clothes, that I discovered to my utter amazement that George Berry was a lame. I had the greatest shock of my life to know that the man who fed me in my early years in Columbus Ohio was a handicapped, going on with artificial legs. Yet he remained ever well disposed and kind. I was humbled. I became ashamed of myself. I was spiritually uplifted.

Other events lined up for the independence celebration were on. Ballroom dance was slated for the night. I attended with my wife. There at the hall were all that mattered in Nigeria. This seemed to be the climax of the days celebration as jubilant Nigerians manifested their happiness like children, dancing and throwing money about.

After the fanfare of October 1, other official formalities, national and international were performed to complete the circle of nationhood. This included the enrolment of Nigeria at the United Nations. A high powered delegation of the Prime Minister Abubakar T. Balewa, Foreign Affairs Minister, Jaja Wachukwu, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, myself and few others were given this important national assignment. We left Nigeria by plane. But while we were about to depart, the Prime Minister sent somebody to call me saying that both of us sit together in the front seat. It was a smooth flight to New York City. In New York City, we were ushered to the Hilton Hotel where we lodged. The next morning, we reported at the United Nations. We marched with solemnity as shy brides entering into the cathedral to join the company of the bridegrooms. All protocols were observed leading us to the stage outside where the flags of all sovereign nations of the world were hoisted. As we stood below the stage looking upwards at other nations' flags flying, the hour of Nigeria's destiny struck. At exactly 9.40 a.m. on Monday October 17, 1960, we watched with deep sense of national pride, as Nigeria's Green, White and Green flag was raised from the ground to the sky, taking its position among flags of other sovereign nations.

At the instance of this hoisting of the flag, I remembered some powerful personages in Nigeria such as the Sultan of Sokoto, Oba of Benin, Oba of Lagos, Oni of Ife, Alafin of Oyo, Emir of Kano, Obi of Onitsha, Obi of Nnewi, Eze of Arochukwu, Shehu of Borno, Amanyanabo of Opobo, Obong of Calabar, Ahmadu Bello, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo and all the good people of Nigeria who helped in their special ways in this great fight whom we humbly represented. I also remembered Mazi Mbonu Ojike. I was deeply touched and once more mourned his death. I remembered that after the World War I, Nigeria was not represented at the League of Nations in the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles France nor was she represented at San Francisco after the World War II, and that Ojike, at the instance of African students in the United States in 1945, audaciously entered into San Francisco Conference Hall uninvited. Nigeria then was not a nation. But he received the handshake of representatives of some liberal nations. And today, I see ourselves standing on the soil of

Flushing Meadows, not as uninvited guests, but as accredited representatives of a sovereign nation. Then we were graciously ushered into the United Nations Assembly Hall and took our official seats. We became first Nigerians to deliberate with other nations as the fifth African country to be so recognized in the political history of the twentieth century.

Another great day after independence was March 29, 1961, the day the first indigenous Governor General made his maiden address from the throne to both Houses of Parliament. In the Senate, the next day March 30, 1961, I made a speech in support of the motion for a humble address to his excellency, our first African Governor General. I made this speech under a deep emotional feeling of national pride. Although I was happy that the Governor General was a Nigerian, but I was also aware that his uniform was the uniform of a Governor representing an empire. This feeling was reflected in my speech in the Senate on March 30, 1961 because I was hungrily expecting the day Nigeria will become a republic. For the full text of the Senate Speech see Appendix four.

What we experienced at the beginning of our independent national life have their analogies in other countries with varied comparative exactness. For one thing, the essential ingredients of Nigerian discord, did not involve shedding of blood among the major tribes. We did not engage in active military warfare against the British. It was all pressure, all diplomacy, some moderately organized strikes and newspaper commentaries and condemnations against suppression. The propaganda of mud-slinging, name-calling and blackmail were a part of the instruments used to persuade and disuade while moving adroitly to a single goal of securing our freedom.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

ACTING PRESIDENCY AND FIRST MILITARY COUP

We have no history except that which destiny has contrived. Fools when they appear successful, tend to arrogate their success unto their own powers and genius. You find powerful men, dynasties and empires crumble to dust at the mere touch of a slight wind of social pressure of peasant boys and labourers in the field. So do I become humble, so do I laugh at the proud, the arrogant, and the easy-going among men who never remember God when they appear to attain positions of power.

– Nwafor Orizu.

In dealing with this chapter, I like to recall my reminiscence immediately I was sworn in as Acting President and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to enable us be acquainted with the background of my philosophy of patriotism and ideals of unity. I wrote in my diary:

"At exactly 12.15 p.m. on October 16, Saturday, 1965 at the Lagos House, I was sworn in as the Acting President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria before the Chief Justice of the Federation – Sir Adetokumbo Ademola.

History of men is made by God. *We have no history except that which destiny has contrived. Fools, when they appear successful, tend to arrogate their success unto their own powers and genius.* And yet they have not controlled the beating of their hearts; the functions of their lungs; the operation of their digestive systems etc. No one knows why a child grows inside the womb; how every part

of the body is formed from inside the sperm and egg. We are made. So our destiny. So our greatness. So our fame. They are made. We are nature's symbolism of the whole creation. No man is self-made. Perhaps we are deluded by the fact that when we are born, we grow into activities by using the limbs and brain and exploiting our environment. But are we responsible for our limbs? Did we make our brain? Who organized our environment?

I sincerely believe that we mortals are agents of something we know not what. If not, many men would have carved this world the way they want. Put every body in whatever position they desire. But things never work out that way. You find a powerful man of today to bid a sudden goodbye to all the glories and wealth and power he commands, and yield his goodself to the feast of the worms. You find powerful empires and dynasties and kingdoms, you find financial empires and business edifices crumble to dust at the mere touch of a slight wind of social pressure of peasant boys and labourers in the field.

Life is an enigma. Man is a created creator who has no knowledge of the capital creator.

So do I feel. So do I contemplate. *So do I become humble. So do I laugh at the proud, the arrogant, and the easy-going among men who never remember God when they appear to attain positions of power*. I mean those who hunt for recognition, who tend to give definition to what they are and want people to feel that power is attained only by someone seeking it and demanding it.

Nigeria is blessed with many God-fearing leaders. One of them is Balewa. He is a great political element in the chemistry of our independence era – he cements all actions. So do I remember Zik, Ahmadu Bello and Awolowo.

When therefore, I find myself sworn in to hold forth the reigns of the state, my humility heightened.

One of my greatest assignment since I was born is to become the Acting President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria from October 16, 1965 to January 16, 1966.

There is not much history behind this, except that the 1959 election was a disappointment to the N.C.N.C. Zik went for the

election and lost. When the election was lost, the N.C.N.C. was still in a strong bargaining position. The Action Group sought to ally with Zik and make him the Prime Minister while Awolowo became Foreign Minister. The fate worked differently for the nation. N.P.C. and N.C.N.C got together and formed the Federal Government.

Before this happened, Zik had his hours of agonizing conflict. He was in his Onitsha estate of the new American Quarters. Calm, withdrawn, disappointed. I met him there alone. He was to decide on the issue of accepting to be Senate President from where he would eventually become Governor-General without real political power. He told me he would not go to the centre at all. He would resign from politics or become a floor member of the House. It was quite easy to see why he hated assuming an office, which gave him no authority but rather subdued him under an all-powerful Prime Minister – whoever that might be. I saw this point clearly and sympathised with him. But I felt that our central government needed Zik's presence.

I suggested to him to change his mind. I told him certain things which touched his inner being and which appeared to me to have encouraged him in some points he emphasized. He was in a mood to revolt against the country's apathy as shown in the election. He appeared not to have a very clear knowledge of the realities of the Northern peasants and the gentry. Their attachment to their moslem traditions and institutions; their sense of resignation and absolute obedience to authority was unknown in Ibo land from where Zik came, nor was it known where Zik got his education. It was a nightmare. But Zik wanted a united Nigeria. He knew the awaiting dangers of Pakistanism which could befall Nigeria if a conflict existed between the North and the South at that crucial moment. Colonialism had not gone altogether. The forces of reaction had not subsided in some areas of the South itself. Party men were divided among the members of the NCNC as to which way to go. But all agreed to go to the centre.

Zik's particular problem was a matter of his personal role cum the party in the governmental position of the country. He thought

he would have played a better role as the Chief Executive. The Action Group acknowledged that. The NPC wanted alliance but demanded the office of the Prime MInister, while Zik would become the Governor-General. To Zik this was a difficult decision to make in the light of the fact that for NCNC to operate effectively, it must align with either NPC or Action Group. The NCNC members understood that Zik was unhappy. The NCNC party members did not want their party leader to play the role of an ordinary floor member in the House of Representatives. There must be a compromise with either NPC or Action Group in order that Nigeria's unity must be guarded at that initial stage. There were several meetings among the members of the NCNC. There were two groups of opinion. Some felt that Zik should be the first Governor-General of Nigeria with or without the executive authority. They felt that Zik should be number one Nigerian citizen, protocol wise, and that his position would enable him keep Nigeria one than taking the position which might aggravate division between the whole South and the whole North. The other group insisted that Zik should be a Prime Minister with actual executive authority. This would enable him pursue national and international policies and general development of a new nation most effectively. For him to have led the country into independence and not allowed to have the power to executive position was an anti-climax.

I personally had sympathy for both arguments but the primary objective of Nigeria then was national unity with all interests considered. Before this time, Zik had left the post of Premier of Eastern Region. But before he left, he visited me in my father's palace in Nnewi and told me he wanted me to be a first class Chief, because of my known interest in promoting the traditional institutions in the Eastern Region. He said: "I want you to be there during the inaugural session of the House of Chiefs in order to help them before you take another assignment as you may wish." Zik the mind reader, knew and realized that I was not interested in such a position and equally that I would not ignore his advice put up to me directly. My political attitude is always to serve. I never consider what that service will bring to me in terms of power or money. I therefore

agreed with Zik although not so happily. The next day, a paper of appointment was sent to me. So that when I came to Zik at Onitsha to talk to him about his own position, I was already a first class chief.

In our two hour discussion, we were able to agree on the following grounds:

(1) That being a Prime Minister with Action Group alliance may not yield a peaceful atmosphere at this initial stage of our political experience. I think that the carpet-crossing episode generated this kind of fear in many Nigerians.

(2) Besides, this could alienate the North from him and the Southerners. Their political influence because of their number could not be ignored by any statesman who actually wants Nigeria to be one nation. Then I said: "Gandhi was India, suffered imprisonments and torture for India, went hungry, destitute and naked for freedom, but when India got independence, Gandhi was neither the Prime Minister nor the President. And yet when he was assassinated by Godse, a Hindu, the flags of all important nations of the world were lowered. And Nehru, Gandhi's disciple carried on."

When I was saying this, Zik turned to me and looked curiously into my face, then he said, "alright Prince, if you want me to go to the Senate, sequel to my being Governor-General, then you must go to Lagos with me as a senator and resign your appointment into the House of Chiefs." I did not hesitate to tell him that I shall think it over favourably. I was spiritually satisfied that this colossus of a man, because of his love for Nigerian unity and for fear of its disintegration, agreed to play the role of an imbecile Governor-General in a nation where he was number one actor in the battle field of freedom.

When I got to Nnewi, I reflected on the fact that my school was in a very infant stage of development. Although I had no interest in going to the House of Chiefs even temporarily, but I felt that I ought to be here a year more to nurture my educational program before going to the centre because the setting up of that school to

me was more important than any political post. Two days after, I went to the Premier's Lodge in Enugu. Zik was in one of the rooms packing his belongings himself. He called me into that room. He was wearing white shorts and gown and had a very big bunch of keys in his hand. I immediately said to him hesitatingly, that I had given the matter of going to Lagos some thought. I would prefer to stay in the East for a short period and follow him later. He was stunned and looked at me with a great surprise, silently. Then after about two or three minutes he said to me, "Alright, let me go alone," in a kind of voice that drew deepest sympathy from my heart.

I turned away from him and drove straight to Hon. G. E. Okeke's house. Told him the story of my trip to Premier's Lodge, and how I was ashamed for what I told Zik. I therefore requested him to go and tell Zik that he would not go alone, I would go with him to the Senate. I considered Chief G. E. Okeke one of the most faithful patriots, a genuine nationalist, a reliable and sympathetic friend among the NCNC members I came across. When Zik therefore became the President of the Senate, I took my position opposite of the Government bench, as a leading member. A few weeks after, Zik invited me to his Nsukka residence and told me that he knew it was my turn to be President of the Senate after him on October 1, 1960. But he would like us to consider leaving this post for Dennis Osadebey at that initial stage. I understood Zik's political reasons for collective security. So I told Zik, with all smiles, that Osadebey could go on. Seeing that I did not resist, he added, "well Prince, thank you but I called you here to explain this to you so that you may not feel undermined. Nothing is in your way in the future."

When Zik became the Governor-General, I supported Osadebey in the Senate to be the President. Actually, Osadebey was a very likeable person, unassuming, open-minded, brilliant, courageous and patriotic. He made a good President. And then later left the Senate to go to his new region – the Mid-West as its first Premier. I was unanimously elected President of the Senate twice. By our republican constitution, the President of the Senate was next to the President. He was at once the Vice President (De facto) and the President of the Upper House (dejure) almost like in the U.S.A. It was in this

capacity that I found myself the acting President of the Federal Republic when Zik left for health trip abroad on October 16, 1965. Without any doubt, the post of President during this period was more ceremonial than executive. The Prime Minister was the chief executive of the nation.

The President was the Commander-In-Chief of the armed forces with ceremonial functions. But from all I knew and from my practical experience, he was not moribund. He had a lot of influence. He could will many things without personally executing them. He could give very effective direction without being a member of the executive cabinet. His power of sanction had a very remote and immediate influence in the political thinking and action of the administration and the nation. When there was a friction among or between a regional Premier and the Prime Minister, the President becomes an umpire behind the clouds of mystery because he would only be heard and not seen. When he was seen he was not heard. But the machinery of the government was always and invariably lubricated by the national oil from his lubricating chamber, in the state house. The Prime Minister jealously guarded his executive powers, but most tactfully, he went quietly to solicit the advise of the President on any important policy matters affecting international relations, the choice of cabinet members, of government institutions, including important legislative bills and financial policies etc. He does not have to take the advice of the President but what the President said would have a great impact on cabinet decision in some cases.

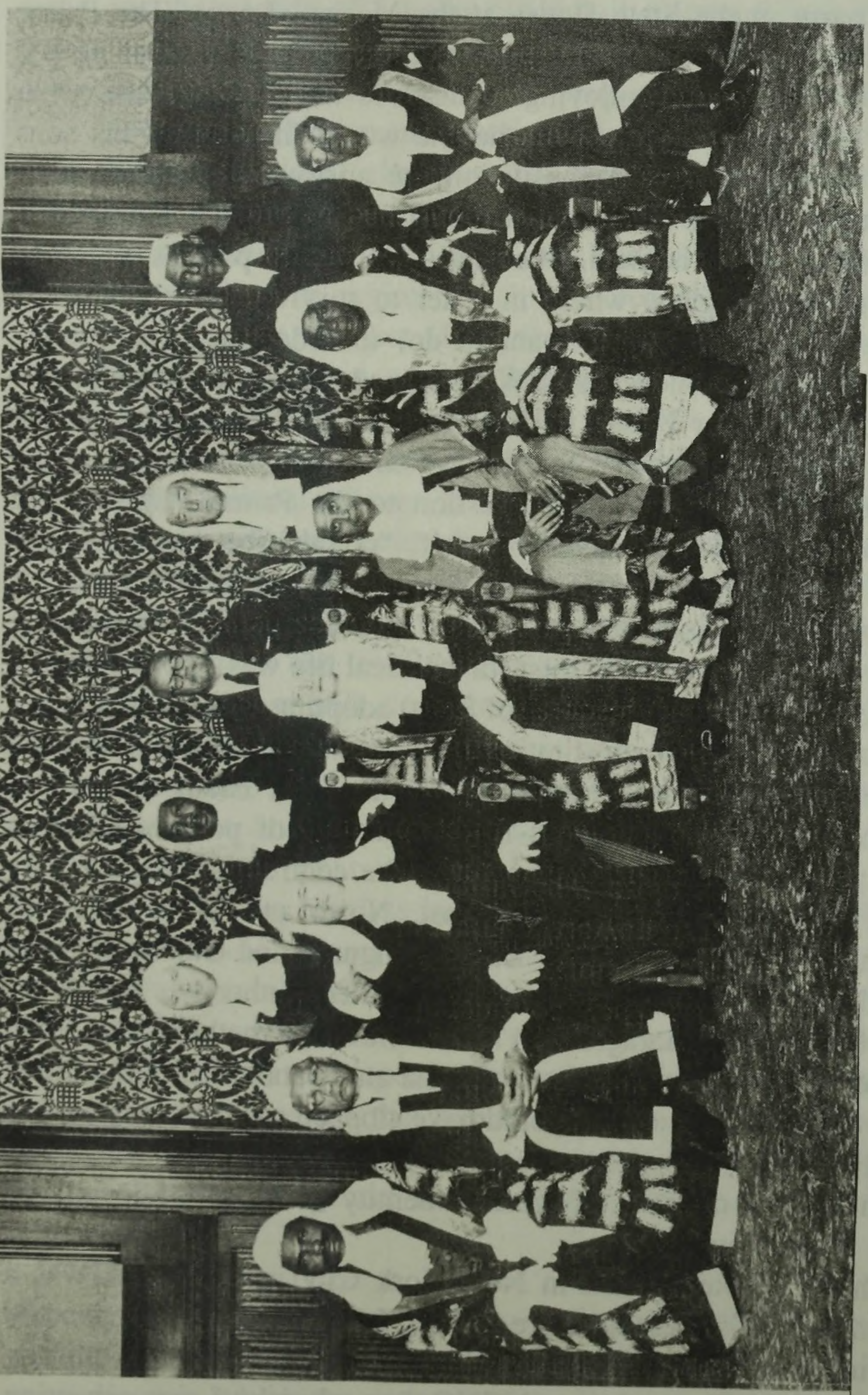
My position as the President of the Senate in the first Republic, made it possible for me to have understood in a very close range the relationship between the President and the Prime Minister.

Conventionally, the President of the Senate was the liaison officer between the President and the Prime Minister. His office was also the quasi court of original jurisdiction in dealing with the complaint of either the President or the Prime Minister against each other. That was why a person who would be the President of the Senate at that time must somehow be a friend of both the Prime Minister and the President and trusted by both at the same time. It was this role that I was destined to play in full and with some desired

results in times of crisis, which may not be mentioned here. Little did I fully understand that the first Republic in Nigeria which I headed was moving into an unprecedented era."

The three major political parties (tribally based) that emerged for struggle of national leadership after independence were torn apart by bitter inter and intra party conflicts resulting from dissatisfaction with sharing of national and political resources between the regions and the tribal groups that led them. How did active confrontation begin? One of the most remote causes not generally taken note of in Nigerian history, was that although there were intra party frictions and tribal feelings during the early stages of the national struggle, there was none the less tolerable, tactful compromises which characterized the political operations nationally among the three major political parties – the NCNC, NPC and AG. The Sardauna of Sokoto, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe had on many occasions given peace a chance even where they came close to political crisis. So the new nation continued to sail above the storm of national social waves undeterred. In 1960, Zik was removed from among the Premiers. He became the Governor-General and then the President of the country, Awolowo went to the centre, M. I. Okpara became Premier of the East while Akintola became Premier of the West and later Osadebey became Premier of the newly created Mid-West. A new political stage was set. The palliative, humorous and tactful handling of the sharp-sword of the regional powers as practised by Zik which held his old colleagues together became absent. Unbridled belligerency caused by inexperience and theatrical demonstration of power inflamed the spirit of aggression among the ebullient Premiers. In some cases, thuggery and violence never known before became a fashionable mode of political action. To some of them, Zik's method of bringing the nation together was deemed weakness, and "strong men" came to the stage with power and resolve to make headquarters of the regions to be stronger than the Federal Republic of Nigeria. They considered every member of the party in the centre their own emissary.

All the federal powers conferred on those emissaries were exercised under the close supervision and approval of the Premiers



Orizu, sitting second from right, with other Commonwealth Presiding Officers at Westminster June 21, 1965, on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of the Parliament of Simon De Monfort.

who were the leaders of their parties. I remember once during a cocktail party in the State House at the Marina, Lagos. The Prime Minister and I were standing together apart chatting as other people were also chatting and enjoying themselves and I asked him, what his first son was doing and whether he would like any of his sons to be a politician. Without hesitation, he answered, "as for me, I would not by myself encourage any of my sons to be a politician". I asked him "why" he said, "because I don't like politics which as I see it now, is a game where in order to survive, somebody must do what he does not really want to do, in order to be acceptable to his own party colleagues". We changed the topic immediately. Since neither he nor I used to drink, we kept on chatting about the weather and other things. Some days after this cocktail party, I remembered this my innocent question to the Prime Minister and his simple reply. Then I said to myself, "could it be that the Prime Minister's decisions as a Prime Minister were not all his own?" I knew the Prime Minister to be a very stubborn person, implacably so. He confessed that his distrust for political life was to avoid (being the voice of Jacob with the hands of Esau) adopting policies of another in the garb of his own constitutional powers. The internal wreckage of the first Republic was caused by the hands of Esaus and voices of Jacobs in the formation and implementation of policies between those representatives of Government in the centre and the authority of the Premiers in the regions – East, North and West. After all there was in the East ironically Zikist Vanguard and Okpara Brigade – a pollution in political pathway to unified authority. We never heard of Gandhi's satyagrahism and Nehru's something else even when Nehru was Prime Minister of India and Gandhi had no political post. In all humility, nothing could have stopped me from developing Orizu philosophy. "Orizuism" instead of Zikism when the original program was to construct Nigerian identity in terms of loyalty to national leadership.

When I wrote Zikism in New York City in 1942, Zik was a proprietor of Zik's press no more no less. I was totally an independent person in New York City not belonging to or benefited from any party affiliation. There was no NCNC then whereby I was expecting

any political advantages nor seeking to be next to Zik in rank. The same was the tragedy of Awolowo/Akintola relationship in the West, while such open rupture between Sardauna and Abubakar was concealed by mature and ineluctable conservatism of the North.

Meanwhile, election malpractices of 1964 federal elections and 1965 Western regional elections had reached alarming dimensions resulting in anarchy and violence that was almost impossible for the civilians to control. The military was called in to participate in policing the Western region which had become the centre of the upheavals since the October 1965 elections. I did all I could to stop the uprising at different stages. During the earlier stage, when I was hinted about the program of the NCNC to join in political violence to the West, I went to M. I. Okpara in two capacities, as the national political adviser to the NCNC and as the President of the Senate. In a secret meeting between two of us only, I enumerated to him the dangers of his leading Easterners to Ibadan which was the plan of UPGA. In his honest to God sincerity, he politely thanked me for my advice but told me that his government had decided to go on. If Zik were still the Premier of the East, the story would have been different. In the same vain, later when I had become the Acting President, I told the Prime Minister – Alhaji Tafawa Balewa to get Sardauna and the NPC to stop going to the West to join in political violence. That was not heeded. Abubakar gave me the impression of being helpless in formation of that policy. He however told me he would contact the Sardauna and give me a feed back.

So the general disillusionment continued to spread everywhere. The political upheaval in the West, the arson and murder, the insecurity of life and property everywhere else in the country was too apparent. It seemed that we at the centre were unable to stop ambitious minds from engaging in and perpetuating violence. The regions were too big and too powerful and could not be easily controlled.

The opening page to Nigeria's historical trip into military dictatorship started on the 15th day of January, 1966 when a group of soldiers led by Major Kaduna Nzeogwu unleashed the first Nigerian coup d'etat in which the nation lost the Premier of the North, Alhaji

Sir Ahmadu Bello, Brigadier Ademuyegun, Colonels Shodeinde and Kur Mohamed in the North, in Lagos the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was abducted and killed. Finance Minister, Chief Festus Okotie Ebo, Brigadier Maimalari, Lt. Col. Pam, Unegbe and Largema were all gunned down. At Ibadan, Chief S. L. Akintola was assassinated.

Part of my personal experience of this traumatic event is as follows: On the night of January 14, 1966, I was still worried that I did not see the Prime Minister whom I had sent for and was told he had gone to Bauchi. That night, there was a party and merry-making at the house of Brigadier Maimalari who lived close to me. At mid night, I heard a gun shot at his house but I did not connect it with any important event. By. 1.00 a.m. after reading some documents, I went to bed and slept well. Five hours later at about 6.15 a.m. something unusual happened. I heard a knock at my own bedroom door. I found that it was my police orderly, Damian Nnakenyi. I went to the door myself and met him at the stairs. He told me that Police Commissioner, Special Branch Force Headquarters, Mr. Fagbola was with him and would like to see me personally for very serious emergency. I was wearing my night gown upon my pyjamas. I told the orderly to bring him up, at the end of the step but not to let him close to my bedroom. The door was slightly opened and I said to him, "yes"? He saluted me respectfully and reported, "this is to let Your Excellency know, that there is a very serious development sir. The Prime Minister has been removed by a group of army officers and later they took away the Minister of Finance, Chief Okotie Ebo." I asked, "do you mean Abubakar?" He said, "yes sir, and there were gun shots at Okotie Ebo's house before he was removed". Then I asked, "did you tell Aguiyi Ironsi the G. O. C. Nigerian Army?" He said, "I wanted to inform your Excellency first sir." I asked, "where are they?" "Their destination is not yet known sir." The G. O. C. (General Officer Commanding) Aguiyi Ironsi is not in his house but the latest report was that he went to Ikeja to inform number three battalion. They will inform your Excellency or the G. O. C. will come himself to report the real position of things. This is the security officer in charge of E.

department." Then I said to him, "go and get Ironsi and Minister of Defence immediately". I went back to my bedroom and prayed for the nation, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance to be in good hands. I was completely surprised. Honestly, I did not then accept the idea that there was a coup and my expectation was that when I see Aguiyi Ironsi, I would instruct him to get his army boys to release the Prime Minister and Finance Minister without delay. I hurried back and went to my office.

By 10.00 a.m., the State House physician Dr. Okeahalam called. I cancelled my wife's operation that would have taken place that day because of the crisis. Dr. Okeahalam said he heard that Akintola was beheaded and his orderly shot dead. He gave an advice and left. By 10.07 a.m. Okoligwe, my personal clerk, in the parliament arrived. He reported that the army came to the premises of the House of Parliament about 7.50 a.m. and surrounded the parliament buildings. Planted machine guns in front of Parliament, locked the chambers and dispersed the members of the Parliament. He reported that parts of the building was barb-wired, some soldiers were mounted at the gate who maintained strict searching of every entrant. Identity cards were checked to allow the MPS to enter and remove their things. By 10.40 a.m., S. G. Tokkida my A.D.C. came into my office. He had changed into army uniform (not that of an aide-de-camp) and had a gun and frightening appearance. I could not recognize him immediately. My police orderly, Damian Nnakenyi and Okoligwe, my personal clerk, stood frightened. Damian stood close to the soldier's gun. Hand alert. I asked the soldier, "Do you come to shoot me?" He saluted loyally and said, "No sir, I am your A.D.C. sir, I come to tell you that nothing can happen to you sir. I have instructed all the boys around that you are a good man." He then reported:

(1) That there is confusion in the country.
(2) That Akintola was likely shot but not confirmed.
(3) Fani Kayode was under arrest – that he was brought down naked to Lagos. They had taken his clothes from him.

(4) That there is revolution within the army resulting in the arrest of senior army officers from the North. "The trouble is now within the army itself", he said.
(5) That some politicians have been arrested but could not confirm any.
(6) That Fani Kayode told him personally that at 3.30 a.m. lights were out at Ibadan, 10 minutes later, he was arrested. Then Akintola was killed.

By 1.00 p.m., A. K. Disu, the State House Secretary reported that he came to work in the morning and found the gate of the State House locked. He was led in and was told that the gate was ordered closed. He went out to Police Central Station where he met the State House A.D.C. who told him that at 5.00 a.m., he was told that the army had taken over. He also heard that Abubakar and Okotie Ebo were arrested. Akintola shot dead. Sardauna also killed. These he said were all rumours and not official. He heard of Sardauna's case at 11.00 a.m. That the Nigerian External Communications and Nigeria Television Services have been taken over by the army. There was no connection with the outside world now.

After relating this, I requested him to invite the Attorney General T. O. Elias to my office. The G.O.C. in company of Deputy Minister of Defence, Galadima of Sokoto, came to see me. They reported the real position of things in the country, particularly among the armed forces. He wanted me to appoint a Prime Minister to enable the armed forces mobilize defence and quell the mutiny. And that there was a foreign government that offered military help if a Prime Minister was appointed. I told him that before I could act constitutionally under the circumstance, I should confer with all arms of the armed forces not the military alone and I should also consult the Council of Ministers. They left.

In the meantime, K. O. Mbadiwe came to my office and requested that he expected me to make him the Prime Minister in absence of Abubakar, because he was deputy Prime Minister to Balewa, since he was representing the NCNC which was the second largest party in the cabinet. This was a rude shock to me. I had

not even come to believe that Abubakar was dead quite apart from the fact that the position of the Prime Minister belonged to the leader of the majority party in the Parliament which was undisputedly the NPC. This, I reminded K. O. Mbadiwe. K.O. also said that Brigadier Maimalari was shot dead the previous night. Not long after, the Ministers arrived. They reported all that they had heard and their meeting with the G.O.C. After deliberating with them, I asked them to go back to their houses that I would call them again later. This I did in order to have time to consult with and be advised by the Attorney-General of the federation. When the Attorney-General, Dr. Taslim Elias arrived. I discussed with him on all the information relayed to me from the visit of Fagbola early in the morning, to my meeting with the G.O.C. and Deputy Minister of Defence and to that of the federal Ministers that afternoon. I then sought his advice. He said:

1. That I was the constitutional Head of State.
2. That he was among those who saw G.O.C. that day with the Ministers.
3. That the G.O.C. stated he was put in a difficult position – told the story of the G.O.C. and Martins Street; of Ikeja loyalty and assignment to stop the Lagos invasion.
4. Cited section 92 of Nigerian Constitution to show my powers to appoint a Prime Minister.
5. Advised that I summon the Heads of the forces.
6. That I have all the full powers of the President, to make all decisions on this matter without depending on anybody because I was not deputizing but Acting President with full powers, and that in absence of the Prime Minister, no one else could make legitimate decision informing the government at this time. But as I had wished to do, that I could send someone to Zik in London and keep him informed.

After my discussions with the Attorney-General, I sent an official message to the NPC Ministers to send me the name of a Prime Minister immediately. When I did not hear from the NPC Ministers soon enough, I sent Dan Ibekwe a Minister of State for foreign affairs

to communicate the NPC Ministers to send me the name of their proposed Prime Minister. Before Dan Ibekwe got to the NPC Ministers it was too late in view of their discussions with the military.

In the meantime, in compliance with my instruction to get all service chiefs, the G.O.C. Aguiyi Ironsi came back with all branches of the entire armed forces of Nigeria. Every service chief came with its separate armoured cars, the army, the navy, the airforce, the police. The clanking, shrieking and ominous sounds of the armoured cars and rhythmic marching of the armed men made my premises look as if they were all rolling into the valley of doom. My house was completely surrounded. I heard the voice of some of my children outside, one of them crying *Egbuoha Nnamo, Egbuoha Nnamo*, "they kill my father, they kill my father".

My orderly and clerk Okoligwe ran into my office where I was reading calmly and my orderly said, "*Abia ha*," which means, "they are here" with his whole body trembling and his face full of sweat. I asked him, "who?". He answered, "the army sir. The whole compound is filled with armoured cars and armed soldiers. Every place smells death". He pointed out and asked me to peep out at the compound through the window behind me and I saw more than 12 stout and well armed soldiers surrounding the back of my office. My orderly told Okoligwe to draw the curtain of the office door. And I laughed and asked him, "do you mean that the curtain is bullet proof?" My wife came into my office and said, "*Nnanyi gbagota n'enu, gbagota n'enu*" which means "run upstairs, run upstairs". I again smiled bravely and told her to go upstairs because upstairs is not bullet proof either. She lingered tremblingly and ran away. I told my orderly to go out and find out where the heads of the armed forces were standing. He came back and reported, "they are now in the parlour sir, all standing up in two rows about to march into your office" I was dressed in pure white Togo suit. I decided to meet whomsoever they were in the parlour, and not in my office. If they were going to shoot me, I reasoned, I would like to face them courageously to receive the bullets in my forehead or chest. I would not like to be shot from behind as if I was running away or from my side as if I was hiding. I did not for one moment

entertain any fear of death even though I was aware that the Prime Minister and others had been killed. Before I went to them, I stood up in my office and said in prayer, "God of Africa take charge of thy servant this day." I walked straight to the door leading to the parlour and opened it.

It was a spectacle to behold. The whole army chiefs in their fullest uniforms and their aides filled the whole parlour, standing alert with curious faces in bewildering silence. As soon as I opened the door and stood before them, they all raised their hands in salute of loyalty, reminding me that I was the Commander-In-Chief of the armed forces of Nigeria. I responded to their salute and invited them to my office. As I turned back, they marched behind me into my office. Then, they spoke. They said that the situation of things in the country was such that the army had decided for me to give them the opportunity by suspending the government, in order for them to take over to quench and control what they called the mutiny within the ranks with military precision. I told them that they would all go back to the barracks and put down their request in writing to enable me know what they intended to do so that wanton destruction will not continue and the security of this nation would be assured. Silently, all of them stood up at once, gave me salute and marched out. I told them to come back early in the evening with their memo so that by 8.00 p.m., I shall announce this over the radio. The nation was accordingly informed of my decision to make a nation-wide broadcast by 8.00 p.m. Like a receding tide of a great ocean the grudging roll of armoured cars flowed out of the compound with their service chiefs. Then the crying and weeping of members of my family subsided, and the breathing tempo of my orderly and clerk became normal.

By 8.00 p.m, all the service chiefs and their aides-de-camp no more armoured cars, arrived. Among the Ministers who arrived were Alhaji Dipcharima, Shehu Shagari, Dr. Elias and some others. No Minister from the East. Only Northern Ministers and Dr. Elias. I therefore asked my orderly to go and summon K. O. immediately, then K. O. Mbadiwe joined. The head of the Airforce was a white-man. He read the text of what they prepared. It appeared to me

that he prepared that document. There were two points for which I did not accept the document initially. They suspended the Parliament and the Presidency and not the Regional Governments. They also asked me to hand over power to the armed forces. I asked them to include in the document suspension of the regional governments and also to specify in person to whom the president will hand over and not the armed forces as a whole. I felt that if the regions were not dissolved, the cause of the impasse will not be solved. Also it would not be expedient to hand over power to the armed forces for them to fight among themselves for leadership. They went away and came back later and we resumed discussion. I therefore wanted them to choose to whom power will be handed over. Ironsi was sitting on my right while the Inspector-General of Police, Edet was sitting on my left protectively. There was no tension. I read the amended document only to discover that while they included the suspension of the regions, they failed to specify to whom exactly I will hand over the power. I put this to them and there and then, they indicated the head of the military – Aguiyi Ironsi. Ironsi whispered to me that he was not prepared to take over and run this government. I turned to him and asked, "Are you younger than John F. Kennedy?" He said, "no sir." "Were you not in-charge of operations in the Congo?" He nodded. "If your colleagues agree that you be the leader, I have no choice in the matter". In order not to send them back once more and delay the whole process, I encircled the words "armed forces" in the document and inserted J. T. U. Aguiyi Ironsi in its place.

During this whole period, the nation was in its most anxious moment. Not having made a broadcast at 8.00 p.m. as I promised, a good many believed I had been shot. As a matter of fact, the story had it that all important families of Nnewi particularly my immediate family collected in heaps around radios awaiting the expectant message of doom. What took all the time was my insistence that the armed forces include the necessary amendments in the hand over document. When the time came for me to broadcast to the nation, I refused to go to the radio station, rather I asked them to bring in the equipment to my office and they did. Just before midnight,

on the 15th January, 1966, I affected the suspension of government as agreed when I made a broadcast to the nation as follows:

"I have tonight been advised by the Council of Ministers that they had come to the unanimous decision voluntarily to hand over the administration of the country to the armed forces of the Republic of Nigeria with immediate effect. All ministers are assured of their personal safety by the new administration. I will now call on the G.O.C. Major General Aguiyi Ironsi to make a statement on the policy of the new administration. It is my fervent hope that the new administration will ensure the peace and stability of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and that all citizens will give them their full co-operation." In the words of major General James J. Oluleye, "this was the solemn Surrendering Ceremony marking the advent of the Military Era".

This monumental and historical decision of mine was not made only because the army thought it so. My personal reasoning and reaction on the matter gave it a tinge of constitutionality and dignity to both my Cabinet and our new found Nigerian armed forces, if not to the entire sovereignty of our nation. In the interest of posterity, however, let me state clearly the frame of my mind on the day of this great event and the reasoning that informed my decision:

1. The major premise was that my understanding as conveyed by the military was "suspension of civilian rule" and not baptizing Nigeria into a military dictatorship.
2. I knew that one or two foreign powers had agreed to send troops into Nigeria to help the Federal Government resist the coup. But the fact that Aguiyi Ironsi and the Deputy Minister of Defence, Galadima had earlier told me that the military could put the coup plotters under control, I felt that the best thing was to allow the army to come in early enough to contain the situation, After all, the Prime Minister and I were there and the UPGA and NPC could not be stopped from converging in the West for irresistible Armageddon. And more importantly, I did not want to preside over the handing over of Nigeria to any foreign power. I knew what this would have meant to the Nigerian nation. I said to myself, "I shall not demolish a house

that I helped to build. No hen will deliberately break an egg it laid. How can we struggle, shed our blood, sweat and tears to liberate a nation and then turn back to sell that nation six years after independence to the colonial over-lords? Oh No." I was quite proud to feel that our own army could be loyal enough and able to defend their fatherland against any internal inferno.

3. As I said earlier, the civilian government could not have broken the mighty regions, diffused some of their powers and strengthened the central government, which measures were necessary to releasing the minorities from the clutches of the three major tribes. The only truly patriotic option was to call in the military of my own sovereign nation which I headed and not to establish a sit-tight psychology to be in office for its own sake at the expense of the life and interest of the populace. What I actually averted was the cataclysmic nature of the impending danger in the nation at that time. The situation was heading towards a war of all against all in Nigeria; all tribes against all tribes; confused war within the rank and file of the armed forces and a confused mixture of armageddon among civilians of all categories. These would have resulted in the massive bloodshed which could result in the death of hundreds of thousands of Nigerians. This, I foresaw and felt it must be halted.
4. When therefore the Council of Ministers agreed on suspension of government after I had given them time to deliberate on it, and advised me, I acted accordingly.

I shall never forget the reaction of some of the cabinet members present during this historic occasion. Immediately the hand over document was signed by me. K. O. Mbadiwe exclaimed, "*Ohizu, afo mulu gi mulu nwa*," (the womb that bore you produced a son). Alhaji Dipcharima commented that looking at my soft face and disposition, no body would know that I had the heart of a lion, that I would have exhibited so much courage and serenity in handling this delicate situation in all simplicity without being for one moment

ruffled in the presence of the armed forces. Then he repeated, "I do not know that you are that kind of person." I said to Dipcharima, "it is the hand work of God." K. O. Mbadiwe exclaimed again in Ibo, "*Ya bu nime anyi nile nulu ogu, na o'bu gi ka Chukwu weputalu ime ihe di aga-a na Nigeria*?"[1] He repeated shaking his head. "*Afo mulu gi mulu nwa*." (your mother's womb gave birth to a child of mystery). After the solemn ceremony, the military chiefs all stood up, alert, gave me final salute and departed. Throughout this period, one thing continued to agitate my mind. The way Northern and Western leaders were killed and nobody was killed in the East except Unegbe who indeed was my cousin from Ozubulu, made it appear an Igbo coup which I knew perfectly well that it was not. I felt very bad about it, because I knew thåt if that understanding were to sink in the minds of our people, that would lead to final disintegration of our country and innocent Ibos will bear the brunt, undeservedly. So I spoke my mind to some of the Northerners about it as President Alhaji Shehu Shagari attested in a special interview with Peter Pan, published in "Africa Now" magazine of November, 1982. In answering a question on how he felt about the death and the manner in which the Sardauna was killed, Alhaji Shehu Shagari answered:

"I remember that Dr. Orizu asked me to see him and when we met he said to me: "You were the closest person to the Sardauna as well as the Prime Minister. I want to express my sympathies. I want you to please understand that, although the boys who have done this were led by Igbos, this is not an Igbo coup." I said I didn't know who had done it. He said: "Well my fear is that if you go back home, your people may think it is the Igbos who have organized the killing of your leaders. I want to tell you that the Igbos have nothing to do with it. This Nzeogwu boy, this is the first time I have heard his name. I want you please to tell your people it is some young soldiers who have started this thing. I want you to try and convince your people not to make this an ethnic affair."

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1 Meaning in English: Among we the founders of the nation, so God has destined you to perform this act in Nigeria.

When Ironsi returned later, he told me that he was under pressure by some top ranking officers – his colleagues who wanted him to use force to eject us. He mentioned names without reserve because he felt that legitimate suspension of government through a constitutional authority without violence in order to defend our country against mutiny is more honourable to the armed forces than unnecessary further violence as exhibited in the North and West. I told him that I was eager to go back to Nnewi having finished my job. He requested that I stayed in Lagos and be his adviser. I told him that I could not do that, but before I left, I gave him one advice, that the very first thing he must do in order to succeed, was to break up the regions and create states period. This will give minorities a chance to participate meaningfully in the affairs of the nation. This also would strengthen the authority of the central government which is necessary in any federal government. He thanked me for the advice, and told me that I would not just leave like that, he had to organize security for me.

On the 18th day of January, 1966, I and my family left Lagos to Nnewi escorted by forty-eight heavily armed soldiers in a convoy of tanks and armoured cars.

As we were moving towards the East, I was troubled in my mind about the fate of our great men who worked very hard in founding this nation – who were undeservedly gunned down with the very bullets left in the hands of the youths to defend them in hours of distress. I was a most unhappy man, looking at mother Nigeria in agony in the hands of those whom we liberated from the bondage of imperialism. The whole entourage stopped at Asaba that 18th night where I prayed for the rest of the night. No food. Early next morning we trouped into Onitsha over the bridge across the Niger. On the 19th of January, 1966, I arrived in my country home in Nnewi which I later baptized God's Village.

Shortly after my return, Aguiyi Ironsi announced the promulgation of Decree 34. This Decree as usual, was the voice of Jacob and the hand of Esau. It was the advice of certain civil servants in the higher echelon of the federal government, who in all their programmes, think only in terms of their own personal promotions

without recognizing the vital interest of other sections of the nation. From the beginning they have mislead many heads of state, governors and military leaders without their being seen or heard and when the blood of those soldiers and other citizens start to flow, they come to judgement as Solomons and return smoothly into their posts without being hurt or hindered. I say this because this idea of unification of civil service was muted during my own time and I knew those who championed it. I rejected it for its dangerous consequences and the fact that it was inapplicable in Nigeria of that day. As soon as this Decree was promulgated by Ironsi without first creating states as I advised him, I called those around me in my house and told them that I believed that this was the beginning of an end. What was that end? Peace left Nigeria. From one calamity to another came the war of secession. This lasted thirty months that could be well described as the darkest age in Nigerian history. I have decided to delegate discussion of my life and experiences during and immediately after the war to another book.

EPILOGUE

IN THE MIDST OF VICTORY *(THE WISE, THE FOOL)*

When man succeeds in his engagements
When ambition is fulfilled as man determines
When marriage with life indicates success
When friends of the world abound around
When praises are showered to man's delight
When wealth flows into his hands with ease
When health and strength combine to uphold
Some men do forget the maker unseen
And boast with pride that they are gods
That their success comes from themselves
And those that fail are sinners and fools
Who may never rise today or tomorrow
And they forget the Job of Biblical history
But time and again they finally fail
The wind of change never fails to blow
To visit the successful and make him fail
And while he fails the failures rise
They rise again to surprise of many
Duration of their success depends on them
To endure so long or fall so soon
And that depends on their theme of life
Whether they believe in God or themselves
And know for certain that they are flesh
Composed of sand, air and fire
All to quench at the slightest touch
By nature's finger of rise and fall
When the fool rises, he forgets his Maker
When the wise rises he thanks his God.

Nwafor Orizu
July 24, 1983.

Appendix 1

THE TEXT OF SPEECH BROADCAST TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON STATION WLW, CINCINNATI, OHIO, SUNDAY AUGUST 16, 1942 AT 5.00 P.M. BY A. A. NWAFOR ORIZU

AFRICA ON THE SIDE OF THE ALLIES

This is the second time I have the opportunity to talk to the whole of American nation since this satanic moment of the Second World War. I am glad that it has pleased the American people whom through their democratic principles, gave me the opportunity to discuss my Africa in relation to this war.

I come from Nigeria my country on the West Coast of Africa. This country contains about 33 million souls with an area as large as Germany and France put together.

Nigeria is essentially a Republican state having many independent states within it. Some states are governed by kings, others by presidents or councils, and my state – Nnewi, is a constitutional monarchy with semi-independent districts, under the paternal leadership of my family, for past five centuries.

There are several important rulers in other parts of Nigeria, like the Oba of Benin, the Alake of Abeokuta, the Obi of Onitsha, the Emir of Kano, the Sultan of Sokoto, the Ooni of Ife, the Alafin of Oyo, the Olu of Warri, the Obong of Calabar, the Eze of Arochukwu, the Oba of Lagos, the Shehu of Borno, the Atta of Igala, the Itsu of Nupe.

Turning to the world affairs as it relates to Africa in this war, I shall confine myself particularly to Nigeria, and generally to West Africa.

During the 1st World War. Nigeria was on the side of the Allies. Immediately the war broke out in 1914, the Northern and

Southern Regiments of Nigeria were amalgamated into the Nigerian Regiment, and steps were taken for the defence of Nigeria, and for offensive action against the neighbouring German Camerouns. The Nigerian Police was also mobilised.

On September 27, 1914, 28 years ago this month, the brave Nigerian soldiers forced an unconditional surrender of the German troops in Duala. They conquered the Germans at Garua on June 10, 1915; they invaded Yaounde in 1915; they brought about the German evacuation of Mora on February 1916. This last conquest brought the German Camerouns into a complete defeat.

On November 16, 1916, the Nigerian troops marched into East Africa and there they proved their spirit of courage and suffered heavy casualties. After their gallant participation in East Africa front, they set their foot on the onward march toward Mesopotamia, but as they were marching into Palestine the bell of Armistice rang.

In the World War II we cannot at this time, for obvious reasons, state in detail what Nigeria means to the Allies today. But we shall not forget that she has donated many millions of dollars to some European countries and particularly to the British Empire. Women and children in Nigeria have denied themselves of their portions of eggs and peanuts and other foodstuffs in order that the children in England and other small European countries might eat. And apart from her position on the globe, which makes her an essential factor to American security from Axis aggression, there are other important strategic war materials which Nigeria supplies to both America and England. A great many Nigerians have volunteered to fight, even though she is not at war now, and I understand through recent communication that one of my younger brothers has volunteered, and is now in the battle field on the side of the Allies. All these facts are applicable to other West African countries, such as Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, French West African, Liberia and the Gambia.

The problem of African Countries is that they want to know now whether the Christian nations are really ready to apply the Atlantic Charter to all the world who shed their blood in this war. Nigerian Press has already communicated the Prime Minister of Great Britain on this issue, and we hope, and believe very strongly, that

the false promises of the last World War cannot be repeated again in international relations.

Africa has several basic points to contribute towards the final peace settlement, and she looks up to the United States of America and other Christian nations to co-operate with her in her struggle towards:

1. **Mental Emancipation** which involves a public education by the African for African in preparing creative and democratic citizens in Africa for the world.
2. **Social Regeneration** which implies the creation of new social order which will be essentially African and yet inclusive enough to fit into the scheme of things for the twentieth century international government, for the world.
3. **Economic Security** which involves supplying Africa with capital and technological devices which she lacks for turning her limitless resources into use for the world.
4. **Political Livelihood** which implies international respect for the sovereignty of the African States and their kings, whether they be militarily weak or strong, and thereby spur confidence among all nations for a common battle for freedom, for the world.
5. **Spiritual Mission** by which Africa points out to all the world that her people are essentially Christian by their cultural disposition. Today, Africa is the salt of the world, and we do not want to lose the saver which God has so mercifully bestowed upon us. The mission of Africa to the world and particularly to the Christian nations is to return to Christian principles in shaping the world of tomorrow. That will bring an enduring peace.

We cannot find peace by turning the pages of all the dictionaries and searching through all the libraries for past and present records. To me that cannot work. My opinion is this: "The way to have peace is to make peace; the way to make peace is to reckon with the interest of all; and the way to reckon with the interest of all is to represent all. This is African message to all who struggle for *Freedom* and *Peace*".

Appendix 2

AN ADDRESS TO THE EASTERN CHIEFS CONFERENCE AT THE NNEWI PALACE AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE EASTERN CHIEFS CONFERENCE BY DR. PRINCE A. A. NWAFOR ORIZU THE CONVENER

Your Highness, honourable chiefs and most respected traditional rulers of the Eastern Region of Nigeria, I welcome you once more to my father's palace in Nnewi. This is the third time we are meeting in this palace this year. I give you warm greetings from H.R.H. Igwe Orizu II, my senior brother who is unavoidably absent. Let me thank you most humbly for having responded to my personal invitation to you during these three occasions.

We have been able in these three occasions to meet each other and discuss the urgent need to awaken the sense of responsibility and identity which was hitherto absent among the chiefs of Eastern Region when compared with the chiefs, obas and emirs of other regions. The assignment you gave me to draft the first constitution of the Eastern chiefs has been read and adopted unanimously. Henceforth we can now write to the Eastern Nigerian Government with official strength of our unity for recognition and eventual establishment of the Eastern House of Chiefs.

Chief Peter Aroh of Abatete, Onitsha Province has moved a motion of thanks supported by Chief Ezeliora Nwizu of Ifite Owerri of Owerri Province thanking me for my humble efforts to originating these conferences singularly and all expenses involved in these three occasions. The motion further proposed that I be the first president of the Eastern Chiefs conference in appreciation for my singular efforts to inaugurate this most important historic conference. This has been unanimously carried. Honourable Chiefs and Traditional Rulers, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for this honour done to me. I shall deem it more honour bestowed upon

me if you allow me to request that this conference accept H.R.H. Chief J. N. Orizu, Igwe Orizu II, to be your first president, as my senior brother, who is the Obi of Nnewi town and Agbaja clan. I have regretted his unavoidable absence which is not a slight to this august body.

I like to say a few words on the role of natural ruler or a monarch in a democracy. We the founders of this new Nigeria which will soon become independent believe in democracy, and in many ways democracy and monarchy are incompatible unless steered by political ingenuity of able statesmanship and harmonious philosophy. It is natural for any one of us to ask: why is a monarch so beloved, so admired, so proudly cherished in a first-class democratic society like England? Why are the aristocracy, the lords, the earls, the knights accepted in a socially enlightened society where equality of men had been drummed into the ears of the masses for ages? Why do the free and powerful commonwealth nations bow to a crown in twentieth century?

England had an unusual record of a tradition for social reform. More than most of the countries of the world, they had produced some of the greatest minds who trenchantly defined and defended the rights of man and the equality of all persons. Those men had vigorously and with fearless candour condemned the malignant effects of privilege, titles, social positions accruing to people merely by the virtue of their birth and denied to others by the same biological accident of heredity.

We cannot begin to enumerate. We cannot retrospect into the many writings of Englishmen who steered England from the days of Magna Carter, through the era of enlightened despots of the eighteenth century, to the rise of the middle class and the representative government. The story of the English revolution of 1642–49 is well know. In 1832 the English middle class "upset the ancient aristocracy of England and made themselves inch by inch, supreme lords of the British Empire, and its destiny, By liberty they meant freedom from feudal tolls and harassing legislation; by Equality they meant that they were as good as any wig or miter in the land; by Fraternity they meant modestly to suggest their eligibility to the

salons and sires of the aristocracy". Able writers worked out a doctrine of natural rights of man to "Life, liberty and property".

Long before America and French revolutions, England had started and acted on the theories of the rights of man. They had revolted against monarchial absolutism. John Locke was an English philosopher. Jefferson of America and Rousseau of France all took after the writings of John Locke. The story of James I, 1603–1625, and Charles the I, 1625–1649 demonstrated clearly the mind of the Englishman.

Let Nigeria not fool themselves. The Englishmen were capable of and did behead their king when aroused to anger. And that is the reason we must understand why it is that the country in modern Europe to provide the world with the principles of revolution against monarchy, has retained the most powerful and most renowned kingdom in the present world?

Some frightening, bloody experiences of the consequences of iron rule had taught the English monarch that the masses of a nation are like flies, and that you catch more flies with molasses and not with vinegar. They have learnt and kept the rules of political game which provided that man is by nature freedom-loving; that to be above him you have to reign over him but leave him alone to rule himself; that whenever any king attempted to rule and not to reign, he faced a slow or an abrupt decline of the people's affection which invariably ended in active rebellion or violent termination of the kingdom. It happened to king Charles the I, the Czar of Russia met his waterloo in 1905. Louis XIV drank the water of tragedy in 1879.

But the English people have a unique tradition of conservatism coupled with enduring common-sense and reasonableness. For all their love for liberty history has taught them that society is ennobled and beautified by political ornament which is the crown, while the dirty almost thankless job of ruling the people is left to the people for the people. The crown unifies without active authority, the people's representatives, legislate and execute with power in the name of that crown. Yes, every citizen of England is a Queen's loyal subject. The ministers are the Queen's servants. The navy is Queen's navy. The army is the Queen's army. The parliament is the Queen's

parliament. All the commonwealth countries and the colonials are the Queen's subjects. What a great monarch lives there in the Buckingham palace. And yet for all the Queen's reigning powers, the poor lady has no choice of marriage beyond the orders of the realm, she cannot associate as she likes. She cannot handle money herself. She cannot travel to places of her own choosing without the approval of some one else. She cannot even enter into the House of Parliament without permission. She cannot even receive gifts not approved by others. You can become a member of any religious group or belief. The Queen has no choice of religion. She must remain the defender of a particular faith. There are three most important freedoms of man; freedom of speech, freedom of worship and freedom of movement. The Queen has none of these to remain the Queen. But she takes it with pride and humility knowing full well that democracy offers cross before crown. In no other country does that aphorism stand most symbolic as in England.

Here lies a lesson for Nigerian kings. Our concept of democracy is widening everyday. Education will soon turn this nation into a full democratic country. Our monarchs – the Obis, Emirs, Obas, must take time to study the possible conditions under which democratic society admits monarchy. Now the Eastern chiefs will soon be recognised. The Eastern House of Chiefs may follow. Yes, we like to cherish the glories and the unifying influences of the rulers in our midst, but the people want their representatives to rule them.

The secret of popularity of the Queen is that she reigns and unifies without active authority, whereas she graciously permits her loyal subjects to rule. Our Nigerian kings, to live side by side with the tides of democracy and free thought must begin now to develop the sentiment of reigning and unifying without active authority while the common people are permitted to legislate and execute with power – that is the condition of the existence of a monarchy.

Appendix 3
VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE ON EYO ITA GOVERNMENT

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

ENUGU, Nigeria

January 30, 1953.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY HAVING LOST CONFIDENCE IN THE ~~NINE MINISTERS OF STATE~~ ITA GOVERNMENT OF THE EASTERN REGION, AND ~~THESE~~ ITS MINISTERS HAVING TENDERED THEIR RESIGNATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT, AT THE INSTANCE OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NIGERIA AND THE CAMEROONS, AND THE NCNC EASTERN PARLIAMENTARY PARTY, DO HEREBY REQUEST HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF THE EASTERN REGION:

1. To accept their resignations, their withdrawal notwithstanding.

2. To recognise Hon. K. O. Mbadiwe as the new ~~Premier~~ Leader of the Eastern Government.

3. To confer with the said Hon. K. O. Mbadiwe for the formation of a new Government and the distribution of Ministerial portfolios.

1. A-A Aforaka Chief Ohuhu Division.
2. I. M. I. Okon Bende Division
3. [illegible] Ikot Ekpene
4. E. O. Eyo Ugo division
5. S. A. George Awka Division
6. H. Ekwueme Onitsha Division
7. [illegible] Owerri Division
8. K. O. Mbadiwe Orlu Division
9. E. Eyrus Awgu Division
10. J. M. Usiten Abakaliki Division
11. M. E. Ogon Ikom Division.
12. [illegible] Afikpo Division

13. G. I. Ofo [illegible] Aroma 42 [illegible], Warri Division
14. G. Athuru-Uwaka Ahoada 43 [illegible] Uwaka Division
15. [illegible] Ahoada 43 [illegible] Uwaka Division
16. [illegible] Udi Division 44 J. E. Ulom, Abak "
16. [illegible] Awka Division
17. Michael C. Awgu 45
18 V. K. Owgazi 46 [illegible] - Awka Div.
19 D. A. Nnaji Port Harcourt 47 E. a. [illegible] (Udi Division)
20 [illegible] Udi Division 48 [illegible] (Abak Division)
21 A. O Chikwendu Bende Division 49 R. O. Imanaga - Ok. Div
22 Chief S. I. Onuoha Ora " 50 [illegible] Nkwerre
23 U. Ikeagi, Okigwi Division 51 [illegible] Nsukka.
24 F. M. A. Savonmyo, Ogoni Division. 52 [illegible] Owerri Prov
25 R. O. [illegible] Nsukka Division
26 K. J. N. Okpokam 53 [illegible]
27 [illegible] 54 [illegible] Bamenda Div.
28 [illegible] Okigwi Division
29 [illegible] Opoji Division 55 [illegible], Ikeja
30 R. N. Charley, Kumba Division 56
31 N. N. [illegible], Kumba Division 57
32 [illegible] Uwa Division, Bamenda.
33 [illegible] Opobo Division 58
34 [illegible] the Cradle of Nine 59
35 [illegible] Ogoja 60
36 [illegible] Degema 61
37 [illegible] Uda Division 62
38 [illegible] Nkwerre Division 63
39 [illegible] Calabar " 64
40 [illegible] 65
[illegible] 66

Appendix 4

Senate Debates

30 MARCH 1961 [*Debate on the Address*]

Senator Dr Nwafor Orizu : Mr President, Sir, I rise to support the Motion for an Address to His Excellency. As you all know the very existence of colonialism was a result of a long process not necessarily caused by man, man being a bad animal or a wicked person or a wicked thing, but they are a combination of economic, social and psychological factors of centuries. When a country gets out of a colonial power and starts a very slow process, again it gets completely into a quagmire.

I think that Nigerians, while we are happy about the Governor-General having made a speech in the Federal Parliament, must first of all congratulate ourselves for having been able to learn in a manner which made it possible for us to follow the process of coming back to ourselves gradually. Even though independence was won many months ago, we are still winning it to-day ; otherwise we would not be talking about what happened yesterday. That process has not finished and that is why we are here. We shall continue to point out where a vestige that colonial tentacle still remains.

We shall begin to remove them one by one until they are completely finished. To think that they are finished would mean that we are raising a false alarm. Before saying anything about that, I must have to praise what the Governor-General himself first of all praised, that is what I have chosen to call the *Abubakarian* regime, the regime of our Prime Minister called Sir, Abubakar. I saw when reading a paper not long ago a news item in which this man was referred to as a gentleman of dignity. I also would have to add that this gentleman is a gentleman who has an ideal mind which I call pragmatic conservatism, that is, he is prepared to conserve all that we have, but he is not prepared in that conservatism to remain where he is. He wants to move on.

While conserving what we have, he does not fear any opposition, he is courageous to go on but at the same time he keeps on conserving what Nigeria has. I think that is the sum total of his conservatism. I want to say this because I was an eye witness of how this gentleman conducted himself—which he has not told you as Members of the Senate—when he went to the U.N.O. I was an eye witness of

how this gentelman conducted himself when he left this country to go and represent Nigeria for the first time among the nations of the world. You want to hear the sonorous voice of this man, you want to see how this man stood among the nations of the world and I was looking at him with all the pride that I commanded. In a country that is big you never know a really big man until you get out of your country. Go out of Nigeria and see how this man carries himself throughout the world, and you will know that Nigerians should be proud to have him as their Prime Minister. (*Hear, hear*). His speech there was one of the best ever heard because after he spoke, Nigeria's name conspicouosly came out with many interpretations and many words as the most constructive country so far in Africa, and I say this without any apologies, even though we are a young country.

Let us consider again the part played by our Prime Minister on the question of the Congo. He was able, without any hesitation, to move on to co-operate with the U.N.O. by sending our Forces there. Then again, he has sent Jaja Wachuku there, and you can see also in the U.N.O. the type of people Nigerians are. Jaja Wachuku is a young man in the U.N.O. but you would like to see the day he stood up to speak or the day he met Khrushchev. In the midst of us all, Khrushchev rushed out, embraced Jaja and carried him up in the midst of the whole world.

An hon. Senator : But that is a general embrace.

Senator Dr Orizu : Whatever embrace it is, the fact is that Russia constitutes one-fifth of the world, and the fact that somebody from there recognises Nigeria—when you come to think of it, and whether you like the man or not—means that we ought to be proud of ourselves. You want to see also the recognition given to us by other parts of the world. Besides Russia, we have England for example. The first dinner we had there was planned by the Ambassador from England.

The attitude of our Prime Minister to the *apartheid* question of South Africa is one of unabashed frankness. He presented his own case there with originality, and as I have earlier said, he is a pragmatic conservative person. Among the African countries, he has also initiated a programme of having a meeting which is now going to take place in Nigeria.

I think that all these things show clearly well what my hon. friend, the hon. Professor Njoku, said in a passing mention—I do not know whether we all understand it clearly—when he referred to one of the greatest contributions the Governor-General made to this country, probably the greatest. I am not an historian myself, but I think we all work within the periphery of the territory enough to know and to project what could form the basis of history of the future. I know that, of all the things that the Governor-General has done for this country, the greatest of all is his ability tc stabilise this Government ; but he could not have done this without the co-operation of others and that again is an achievement.

Before speaking on other items in the Speech from the Throne, I have to mention again the question of the uniform of the Governor-General. We have been praising the uniform of the Governor-General, but I would like to say something about it because the more you repeat something the more it is in the hearts of the people. I have always said John Styler once told me that it is very easy to remove a man from slavery, but the most difficult thing to do is to remove slavery from a man. If a man had been a slave for a long time and he wants to leave his master, he will refuse to go because when you liberate him you have not removed slavery from his mind.

I must say this with all seriousness that one of the things that will indicate our maturity, absolute maturity, is our ability to do things our own way. It is quite true the Governor-General was wearing the uniform of a Field Marshal ; I like it very much, the Commander-in-Chief of Nigeria. What worried me was that I looked and looked to see whether that uniform was of Nigerian design or of Nigerian origin. It does not look Nigerian. Wherever you see the uniform you cannot say—"This is Nigeria." It is one of the things that I have just said, that some of the items of colonialism are not miles back. The thing is not off yet, we are just in it a little bit more, and the more we know it, and know it with clear understanding without bitterness, we must do something to change it.

I am not saying it with bitterness, but I am saying it so that we can realise that we have to sit down and design our own uniform on these lines. Let the Governor-General be a Field

[DR ORIZU]

Marshal, but let his dress have a Nigerian outlook, even let it have a sword by his side or with two feathers, because I must say, frankly, I did not know it was Dr Azikiwe.

Another point which I want to make is what the Governor-General said about the Police. He said that the expansion of the Nigeria Police would continue with maximum speed consistent with our financial resources. I think the time for complacency is gone. As I said, we have to go on from point to point to know whether colonialism is still with us. I will urge every Member of the Senate to go to the Inspector-General of Police's Office after we dismiss. Ask for what they call—*Quarters' List*. I am very serious about this. Go to the Inspector-General of Police and ask for this *Quarters' List* and see whether we are really having our internal security or whether we are still in the hands of white people.

There is no post in the place that is not in the hands of the white people. We have only one Deputy Commissioner—Mr Edet—who has just gone to the Congo. It is only one. The Inspector-General, the Commissioners in the Regions, the Deputy Commissioners, the S.S.P.s are all white. Internal security in Nigeria is yet absent, the nation must know. Go to the Inspector-General's Office and get the *Quarters' List* and find out. I shall go into this in detail during the debate on the Budget.

I have to praise the Government for making arrangements to appoint a Nigerian Chairman of the Nigerian Ports Authority. That is how we are going to appoint our Inspector-General. As I have said, I need not belabour this point as I will definitely speak on it during the debate on the Budget.

The Governor-General spoke about the Flying Training School. That is a very essential aspect of this nation's defence. If you say you have a home and in that home you cannot prevent anybody from taking your wife, your son, or your property, you have no home. People in the world are no more thinking of the earth. The earth happens to be only one small planet. These people called Europeans have stopped thinking about the earth. They have left it, they are thinking about something else we do not know anything about. As a matter of fact, I think that was why they hurried to grant us independence because, after all, we really have no independence. When we are still struggling on the little earth the Europeans have gone to the moon and are making plans to do something else. You can live on the earth, when he needs you he can take you from the earth.

I think we all know the relationship between the small earth in which we live and the other planets. Therefore, the question of an Air-Force should not be confined to any particular country. I am suggesting that this Government should try to nationalise education, I have been saying it all the time. If you are going to train people, send some to England, some to America some to Russia. I repeat, Russia and others to Japan. Send them there to learn about what is going on in those countries. We are not now married to anybody and we must look ahead.

I now come to oil. It is very good to prospect for oil, but is it not necessary for us to realise that it is high time we got our own Geologists and also oil prospectors who are Nigerians? Shall we leave the *Shell B.P.* or whatever you call them to award them scholarships? Are we so naive as to believe that such a person will work in a manner that will be of benefit to this country after a short time? I want to hear that the Federal Government is awarding scholarships to people who will learn how to prospect for oil and other minerals. Let them specialise, let them be told what should be done and let them be trained for that. We are in a world of planned economy. You do not get anything now without planning. So far, our economy is not planned and our education is not planned.

I praise the Minister of Health for his care of children. I heard that a hospital is going to be built in Lagos exclusively for the care of children and in the Mainland, a general hospital. I think this is good.

I now come to judicial reform. What we heard in the Speech from the Throne about judicial reform has shown an innovation of democracy and individual freedom in Nigeria, when you think of the references to *Habeas Corpus*, to the idea of seeing the Federal Government as a person to the Companies Act Reform, which I hope will include, among other things, the protection of indigenous companies. There are three types of independence; political independence, economic independence, and what I will call psychological independence or social independence.

We have got the first one, two are still remaining. We have not got economic independence and we do not know anything about economy.

Let Senators know that ; the law can make a Nigerian company ; the law can make a small Company into a big Company ; the law can make a small Contractor to be able to build a bridge across the Niger, and the way to do it is to start now. We should begin to speak about these things as we did about twenty years ago. People think we are crazy and mad. People begin to look at us with wonder. "What is he talking about" ? That is not the question. The question is that those other Companies are owned by human beings and we are all human beings. What they do with the Companies is at their own discretion.

It is quite possible to discourage foreign firms from controlling the Nigerian economy. The trend now is to call every Company a *Nigerian Company*. That is, somebody is appointed a director from outside, a Nigerian, one foolish man who is usually given a big appointment, and a big salary so that they can call the Company Nigeria. He has nothing to do with the Company ; he does not know the beginning of it, and he does not know the end of it. And such Companies having made these appointments, go on taking money from Nigeria. We must not let that happen here.

Now, further, if we are not afraid of ourselves, let us know that we can create millionaires from within us in a short time from now. Let me tell you this. If we do not do something soon we shall go to war because Government cannot raise the money. We have to go to America or England and to Canada. It is big men who have to think for the Government. It is not the men who command them to use their money. Therefore I am emphasising that whatever Companies' Act is finally going to come about, we must remember now to distinguish between companies—*Nigerian Companies* and Companies owned by indigenous citizens. That thing is a trick and it has got to go.

I am very happy about this provision of legal aid to the litigant. It is a wonderful thing. and I am also happy about the encouragement which the Government wants to give by reforming labour policy throughout the Federation. That is wonderful indeed.

Then I come to education. I think that one of the things which the Nigerian Government will have to plan—it is a long-term process again—is for a common language through educational assistance. Nobody will dare to make a joke of this area of the economy and it is impossible to predict what might happen tomorrow. We can become gods but I do believe that the languages in Nigeria are good. I know, for one, that *Hausa* is a beautiful language and also it is more comprehensive than most other languages in Nigeria because it is one of the few international languages in West Africa. It contains in it certain descriptive facts, for example numerals that go up to millions.

I know very well that in Ibo, I must confess, we have no million. Let me tell you now, we do not have it ; that is one fact. Therefore we we have a language that is ahead of us already from the point of view of a national language and also certain ideal in the *Hausa* language. It has no abstract words as in *Ibo* and in other languages I know, but in *Hausa* you have ideal words, not words of abstract meaning. For that reason I think it is about time we began to think about a language for this country, one of the Nigerian languages.

Then there has to be a general standard of education, not superimposed upon the Regions. Through discussion and consultation the standard of education in this country can be raised. Then there has to be planned education. I continue to say that this country has never planned its education at all. I was told some time ago by the Minister of Education, and, also I have seen it myself every day, I have seen Italian people who give Nigerians scholarships—thirty here and forty there. Very good. I have never seen a planned economy. And we had better stop all these Commissions—*Ashby* or *Motobi*. It is high time we have a Commission here.

We have brains in this country who know what we want. After all, it is all about education. Education is nothing but the capacity to bring an individual to the knowledge of his environment and how to utilise it. That is what it boils down to. They know the water ; they know the air ; they know their home ; they know the trees ; they know the animals ; they know their houses and they know how to use them and that is all. So

[Dr Orizu]

going round and round and round about it with all these Commissions is only showing immaturity again of the man. But it is not easy for me. Now, with these few remarks I beg to support.

Appendix 5

American Council on African Education Inc.

105 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK 7, N. Y.

FORM SR

Name Christian Twagiramungu Abel.

Country Ivory Coast.

School University of Notre Dame, Indiana.

This form must be carefully studied by each student for guidance and reference on financial aspect of the scholarship scheme. The Council will not hold itself responsible in any way if the student fails to study and understand his relation with this scheme.

I. The American Council on African Education has granted me the Category "f" Scholarship.

II. My parent's or guardian's financial contribution towards my university fees. board, room, and tuition is $_____ per annum or $_____ for four years. The ACAE offers scholarship to cover whatever amount of money remained to be paid towards the university expenses short of the contribution of my parent or guardian. I understand that the university expenses differ from one school to another, and ranges from $800 to $1,800 per annum.

III. The responsibilities of the ACAE in my behalf are as follows:

1. Securing entrance to a university in U.S,A. and financing all correspondence, conferences and trips thereof.
2. Arranging my transportation from Africa to U.S. while I pay the cost of travelling.
3. Facilitating the obtaining of passport and visas from the governments concerned.
4. Facilitating the transfer of funds where desired.
5. Reducing my university expenses according to my accepted category from Africa.

IV I understand:

1. That to remain under Category "f" of the scholarship, I must remain in the college designated by the ACAE.
2. That if for any personal reason I urge to transfer to another college; and provided that my Parent or guardian and the ACAE approve such a transfer which I personally suggest, I am entirely responsible for any extra financial expenses which the change may involve. The ACAE will in no way be held financially responsible for such extra expenses,
3. That the ACAE will not grant me a change from one university to another without the written consent of my parent or guardian or their accredited representative with whom the Council has had dealings in connection with the scholarship,
4. That before leaving Africa I must decide upon a course of studies to be pursued under the Council's scholarship, and that my field of choice, if approved by the Council, shall remain unalterable by me without the consent of the Council. If on reasonable grounds, the consent of the Council is obtained for such alteration, the extra financial burden if any, falls on me.

V. I understand that the ACAE has accepted me because its policy is to encourage students who profess not to have enough money to pay for all their school expenses; and, therefore, that the expenses I shall incur must conform with the minimum necessities; that such items of expenditures must be summarized and filed by me for the approval of the Council and my parents or guardian; that such budget cannnot exceed the resources available for Category "f" scholarship which has been granted to me.

VI., I understand:

1. That in transporting me into the United States under student status, the ACAE has guranteed to U. S. Government that I must return to Africa after my studies,
2. That during the time of my stay in the United States, I remain as a student; that failure to conform with the above rule will automatically involve serious measures which may culminate in my repatriation.

VII, I understand:

1. That I shall remain under the guardianship of the American Council on African Education as long as I am in the United States as a student.

2. That if there arises any reason for which I shall feel dissatisfied with remaining under the Council's aid and guidance, I am expected to present my reason or reasons for dissatisfaction to the ACAE who will endeavor to amend things to enable me to continue my studies under normal conditions; if for any reason, I decide upon being relieved of the Council's supervision without Council's consent. I must comply with the following conditions:

   a Obtain a written approval of my action from my parent or guardian.

   b Obtain a written approval of the persons who originally recommended me to the Council as shown in the original Application Form filled by me.

   c. Effect immediate refund of whatever amount which the ACAE might have incurred on me. This refund includes any form of scholarship——tuition, board, room, books, incidentals and other fees—which the Council has obtained by its good services from universities, private institutions, foundations or individuals, as well as all other service charges of which the Council keeps account in respect of each and every one of its students.

VIII. I understand that I may not desert the American Council on African Education before the actual completion of my studies in the United States; that my doing so shall commit me to the penalties embodied in section (b) of No, VII . of these regulations. (The word "deserted" is hereby used to mean informally leaving the educational institution, or quitting that institution to engage in any subversive or other activities other than educational pursuit while in the United States under the Council's auspices)

IX. I understand that should I fail to comply with any of the provisions of these regulation, the ACAE may take any measures to enforce compliance.

X. I understand that if I maintain a satisfactory academic record, good character, and continue to show a spirit of cooperation , social service, the Council may not require any refund of the scholarship grants, and I have no financial obligations whatsoever (except where there is a specific agreement or understanding) to the Council, except to show a marked sense of social responsibility to my community and the community of nations.

XI. I understand that whatever amount of money I deposit consonant with my category will be applied or administered by the ACAE in any way it sees fit to carry out its general scholarship functions, without any particular expense to the College where I am located, provided that school expenses in any college provided by the Council carries with it a value of my deposited fund plus the scholarship grant per year.

XII, Basic Expenditure Items:

1. Tuition & Fees	3. Room	5. Personal expenses
2. Board	4. Books	6. Travelling ,,

Under Category "4" to which I belong, I am responsible for all items on section XII. marked X; this does not effect my annual contribution of $_____toward the actual university expenses.

XIII. I understand the Form SR to be an agreement between myself and the American Council on African Education Incorporated.

.....
Signature of ACAE Representative

C. A. Uba
.....
Signature of the Student

.....

.....
Signature of Witness

.....

ohn Okwesa, Lagos.

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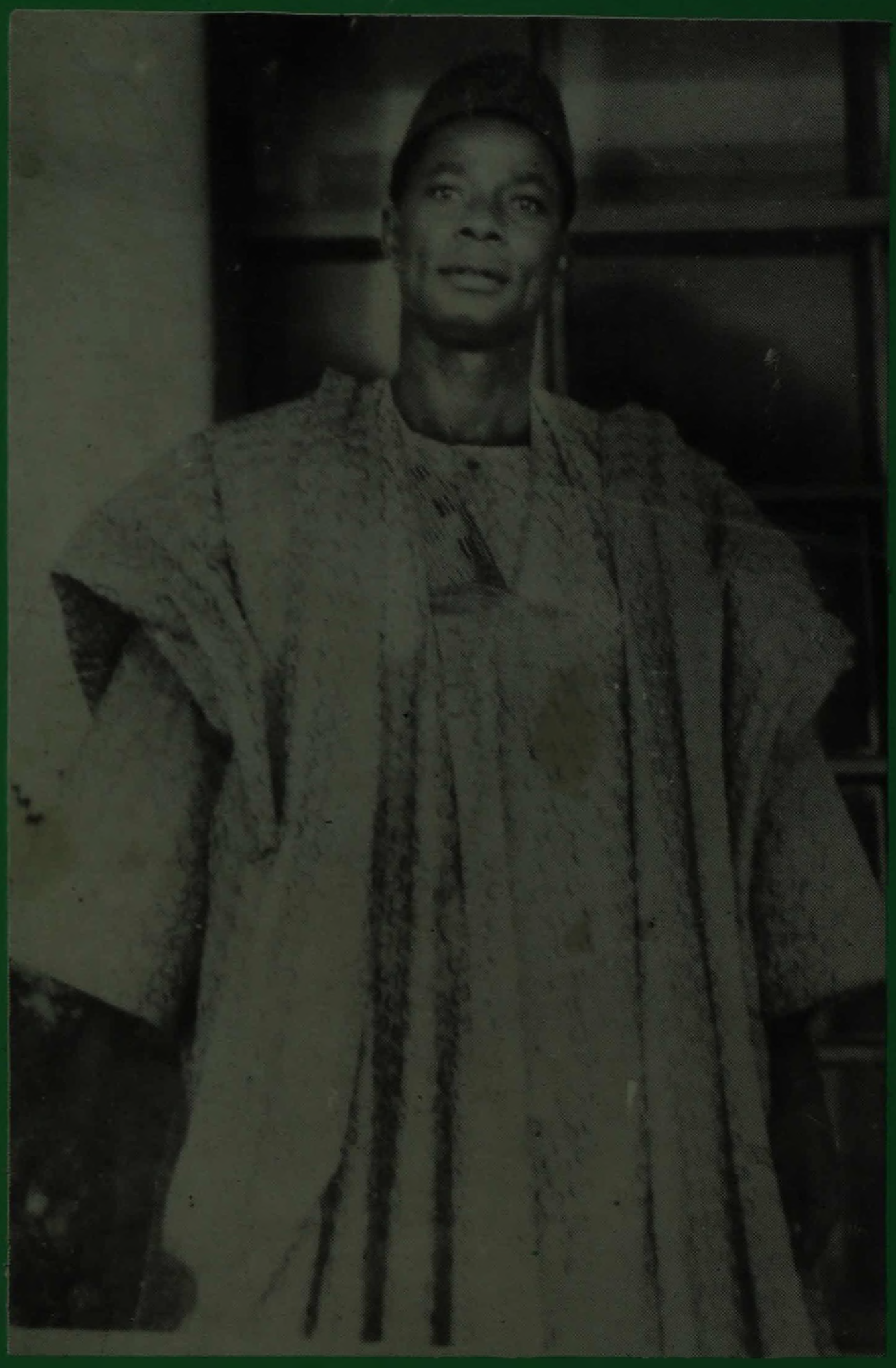
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*A.A. Nwafor Orizu. "14th West African student, 10th Nigerian, 8th Ibo in U.S.A." **AWO**: the autobiography of Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Cambridge University Press, 1960, p. 140.*

●"I grasped the idea that Africa could not defend itself against domination by others unless its people were ready to repudiate certain ideas of the universe and cosmic phenomena. They must believe in the infinite capacity of the human mind and the mechanical complex of the body. It is a vision of progress. To reach and stimulate the human mind in Africa through education: to make it believe in the vision of progress became one of the ideas which possessed and used me".

- p. 236 & 237

●"No nation, no religion has been built except with the blood of a sacrificial few on the eve of Good Fridays awaiting resurrection morn. Founders of nations must be men of integrity. Integrity implies abiding by constant principles and looking for no easy way of escape from clinging to eternal truth."

- p. 494

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